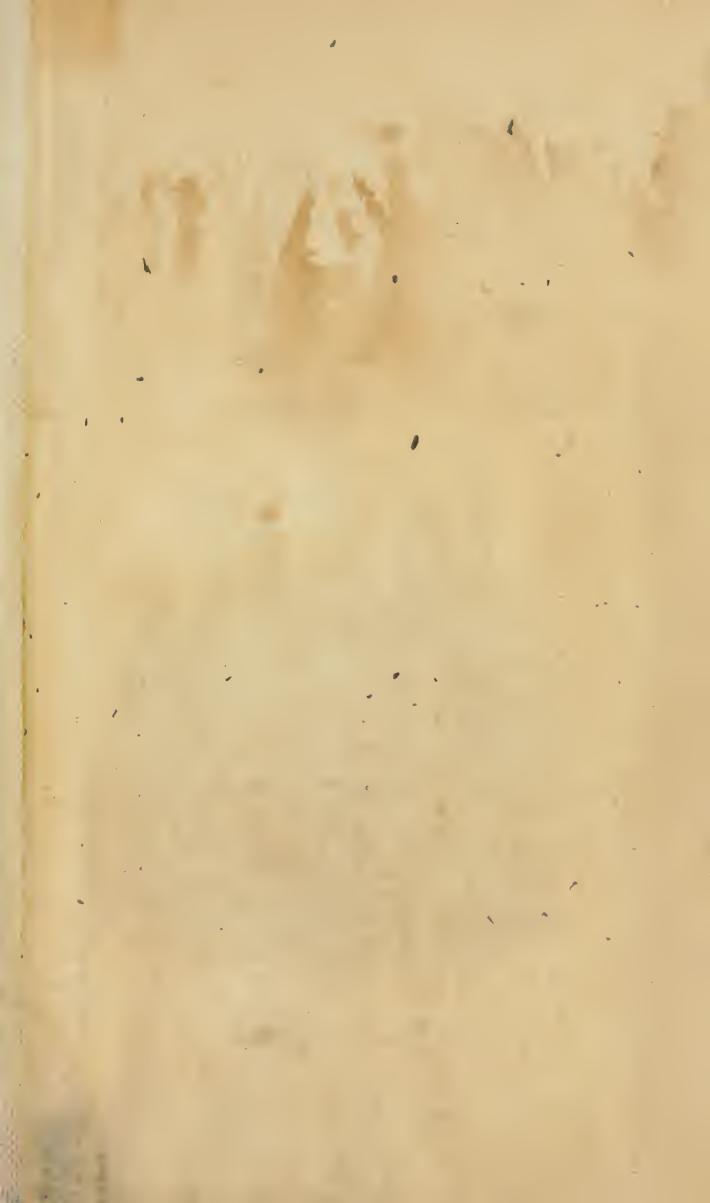


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History of the reformation





HISTORY
of the
REFORMATION,
BY
THE REV. HENRY STERBING, M.A. &c.
Author of History of the Christian Church.
IN TWO VOLUMES VOL. II.



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Death of Tinsdale

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ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL,

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF

THE HISTORY OF THE RÉFORMATION.

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HISTORY

OF

THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER XII.

STATE OF AFFAIRS. — POLICY OF CHARLES V. — ELECTION OF FERDINAND. — OPPOSITION THERETO. — MEETING OF THE PROTESTANTS. — LUTHER. — EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND. — DEATH OF ZUINGLE.

THE proceedings at Augsburg brought the protestants and their opponents into direct collision as parties in the state. Neither Luther, nor any other leader of the reformers, could be justly charged with having promoted this political schism. It was the natural result of measures undertaken by statesmen who had not yet learnt the respect which is due to principle and the love of truth. The human mind has an inalienable right to the examination of whatever is proposed for its adoption. On this depends the advancement of our race in knowledge; and to deny it, is to take from mankind the chief defence of whatever is most valuable in civilisation, and to make it impossible that religion should ever consecrate reason to its service.

Charles V. was superior to many sovereigns of his age in capacity and princely virtues. But his views were bounded by the desire of aggrandising his family, and establishing his successors in the possession of a

power which should yield to no growing spirit of freedom and inquiry. Instead, therefore, of considering the essential difference between political disaffection and the separation of Christians from a church supposed to be corrupt and tyrannous, he was persuaded to adopt measures, which might have been wise and wholesome in the former case, but which, according to the nature of things, could in the latter lead only to incalculable mischiefs.

It was impossible that those who had embraced the principles of the reformation should recede from the ground conquered for them by an appeal to Scripture and common sense. Nothing was wanting to secure their firmness and perseverance. They had success to encourage them ; knowledge to invigorate and guide them ; and they were, for the most part, men of strong minds and sound learning. To have given up what they now possessed, would have been to sacrifice the riches of freedom, of intelligence, and the recognition of every principle dear to the hearts of enlightened and honest men.

Politicians have, in every age, estimated the force of opinion at too low a price. We speak of opinion ; not of the enthusiasm of a few bold and over-heated minds, nor of the impetuous and ungovernable determination of the multitude. To these the statesman is always ready to give heed ; and he either employs them as engines of his own power, or at once enters into contention with them as the most dangerous of antagonists. Charles, like other politicians, could see the effects which might be expected to follow from opposition to established institutions ; and he allowed himself to be betrayed into the error of supposing that similar dangers could only be produced by the same cause, and that the same methods were to be pursued in depriving protestantism of its influence, as would be required in stopping the progress of a rebellion. But the force of opinion is stronger than the might of armies, or the most perfect skill of the statesman. It has the grandest attribute of

humanity for its essence ; and, if it be founded in truth, breathes of a still higher and a divine principle. Nothing can be brought against it, but what is inferior both in nature and in purpose ; and it is, doubtless, a law of the moral universe, that when truth has once lifted up her head, and proclaimed her will, the good she has bestowed shall not be forced from the hands of those who rejoice in its possession.

Had Charles been as devoted to the interests of the church, independent of its political relations, as was Philip II., the measures which he adopted might have found an excuse in their conformity to the usual practices of catholic sovereigns. But the whole tenour of his career evinced how free he was from purely ecclesiastical influence. The error, therefore, which he committed, in losing sight of the proper claims of protestantism, and in supposing that they might be effectually resisted, was as little to his credit as a statesman, as it was essentially abhorrent from liberality and justice.

The elector of Saxony had retired to his states with A. D. the feelings of a man who knew that a great trial of 130. fortitude was at hand, and that he had only sufficient time to prepare himself for the troubles which would soon burst like a flood upon his house.* On the 28th of November, he received letters from the emperor, desiring his attendance at Cologne on the 29th of the following month ; and these letters were accompanied by others from the archbishop of Mentz, who announced that the object of the meeting was the election of a king of the Romans. The character of Ferdinand, and the part he had taken in the late proceedings, were not such as to render it prudent for the protestants to

* Luther wrote thus to one of his friends at this time : — “ It is certain that the emperor is resolved to restore all things as they were, and to establish the domination of the pope more firmly than ever ; which hardness will excite, I fear, great tumults in the empire, to the destruction of the pontiffs and the clergy. For the more powerful cities, as Nuremberg, Ulm, Augsburg, Argentina, Francfort, with twelve others, openly refuse and oppose the decree of the emperor, and adhere boldly to our princes.” — *Briefe*, t. iv. p. 200.

yield any of their legitimate rights in his favour. John Frederic, therefore, lost no time in acquainting the princes of his party with the course which he intended to adopt. The more effectually to secure the execution of these defensive measures, he proposed a meeting at Smalcalde, on the 22d of December. His summons was readily attended to, and the great body of protestant allies there signed a treaty which bound them to the mutual defence of their rights and religious liberties, should any violence or injustice be attempted against them. These resolutions were founded on the assertion that the citation issued by the archbishop of Mentz was illegal, and that the creation of a king of the Romans would be an infraction of the bull of Charles IV., and would infringe upon the liberties of the empire.

On the 24th, the confederates addressed a letter to the emperor, in which they acquainted him with the apprehensions which had been inspired by the reports respecting the election of his brother Ferdinand. Against this measure they protested, as a violation of the ancient custom of the empire ; of the oath which Charles himself had taken ; and as subversive of the laws and privileges of the Germanic states. " We entreat you," they said, " by our love both to you and to our country, not to pursue a course which can only produce confusion and distrust. Let the remembrance of the past exercise its proper influence in this matter ; and induce your majesty to employ your authority to prevent rather than favour the election of a new king, and the subjection thereby of the members of the empire to two masters, instead of one lawfully elected sovereign."

The apprehensions entertained at the prospect of Ferdinand's election were not confined to the protestants. No one was more opposed to the design than the duke of Bavaria ; and both he and other catholic princes used whatever means they could safely employ to prevent the success of the emperor's plans. But with so little reason has Luther been accused of favouring seditious principles, or any other species of opposition to legi-

timate government, that he strongly dissuaded the elector of Saxony from resisting the wishes of Charles ; and even adduced arguments in favour of Ferdinand's succession to the dignity which he coveted.* If the emperor, he suggested, should find him determined in his opposition to Ferdinand, there was reason to fear that he would transfer to George of Saxony the possession of the electorate. He added, moreover, that Ferdinand ought not to be opposed on the plea that he was not favourable to the cause of the Gospel ; for that his election would be the act of the emperor, to whom they were bound to render allegiance : that should he be appointed to the dignity in question, it was not the part of Christians to tremble ; for that God would as surely deprive him of the power to prevent the spread of the Gospel, as he had in that respect rendered Charles himself powerless ; and that they should, therefore, evince the same constancy and firmness of mind as had characterised their conduct at Augsburg.

Luther dreaded the effects of a civil war more than the obstinacy of the bigoted, or the violence of persecutors. The landgrave of Hesse had uttered expressions which gave too clear a sign that he was ready to take arms on the first occasion offered ; and it appeared clear to Luther, that a persevering opposition to Ferdinand's election could only end in a sanguinary struggle, which must involve the whole of the protestants in distress and misery. " Ah ! Lord God," he exclaims at the close of his letter to the elector, " I am a child in the things of the world ; I will pray and intreat, therefore, that God may be graciously pleased to guide and direct you, as he has hitherto done ; and should events take place, which I fain would not see, may the Lord still

* Sleidan, t. i. l. vii. p. 308. Seckendorf, l. i. sec. i. p. 3. It is reported that the elector, when questioned on this subject, observed,—“ If a neighbouring power should assail us on account of our faith, I should think it my duty to resist the aggression by taking up arms ; but should the emperor do so, I would yield, seeing that I could not die better than in the cause of the Gospel.” — *Sec. Ad.*

grant us his grace, and bring things to a prosperous end!"*

Nor was Melancthon less urgent than Luther in dissuading the elector from joining in the opposition to Ferdinand's elevation. He answered the objection which had been adduced to the existence of two rulers at the same time, by citing examples of such a twofold sovereignty from the history of Rome and Germany.

The consultation at Smalcalde terminated on the last day of December; and the princes and deputies of the protestant cities, having entered into a defensive league, immediately despatched letters to the emperor, containing their remonstrances on the subject of the proposed election, and earnest petitions that their rights and liberties might not be exposed to the arbitrary proceedings which seemed authorised by the decrees at Augsburg. He had received, they said, the most illustrious proofs of their loyalty and affection; and had, they acknowledged, softened the force of the original resolutions, as exhibited by the elector of Brandenburg: limit then, they added, the power of the fiscal chamber, that we may feel secure from violence till the calling of a general council: let this be granted, and we will contribute, as heretofore, not only to the war against the Turks, but to every other cause which may concern the welfare of the state.

Charles opened the proceedings at Cologne by an address to the states, in which he explained the motives

* Basnage remarks on the league entered into by the protestant leaders, that the princes so engaged had the rank of prince before that of electors; and that, possessing sovereign authority, they had a right to raise armies, to make war, and to form leagues independently of the emperor, and even against him; as they did, in fact, with Gustavus Adolphus and the king of France, without being accused of the crime of rebellion. They treated with the emperor as sovereigns, as appears by the treaty of peace between Ferdinand II. and the elector of Saxony; and when they have made war with him, they have asked neither favour nor pardon. They have even elected an emperor and a king of the Romans in spite of him who sat on the throne. It is true that the electors are vassals of the empire, and that they have to pay a small contribution for their states; but nothing is more common than to see vassals, when they have the rank of sovereigns, make war against their lord. Edward III., after having paid homage to Philip of Valois, waged continual war with him; and Francis I., vassal of the emperor for the duchy of Milan, made war with him, without being treated as a rebel. — T. ii. liv. xxv. c. vi. p. 1497.

which led him to desire the election of his brother Ferdinand as king of the Romans. The dominions over which he had been placed, he said, extended through many lands; and the attention which they claimed, defied the attempts of a single sovereign, however zealous he might be in the discharge of his duty. An additional cause of anxiety, he reminded them, existed at that time. Men's minds were unsettled on the gravest matters of religion and politics; and Germany, especially, was suffering from the disorders thence produced. As he could not reside in the country himself, it seemed necessary that effectual measures should be taken for its more orderly government; and he had accordingly established a senate in the empire. But the authority of this body had been despised; and he found himself, therefore, obliged to seek the appointment of a king of the Romans, who should possess a power second only to his own, and who, by his ability and virtue, might merit the confidence of the empire. He knew no one, he said, better fitted for this position than his brother Ferdinand, whose dominions, as king of Bohemia and Hungary, were a wall of defence to Germany, and in whom he himself could repose with comfort for the execution of whatever duties might devolve on the sovereign.

Notwithstanding the arguments thus advanced by the emperor, it was not till after a deliberation of some days, that the princes present at the assembly could be persuaded to give their assent to his proposal. This resistance they coloured by a complimentary expression of their desire that the emperor would himself take up his abode among them. But Charles had formed plans of government which admitted not of his yielding, even in appearance, to this request; and the electors found themselves obliged, either by fear, complacency, or a sense of duty, to proceed to the nomination of Ferdinand as king of the Romans.

The policy of this measure was as clearly stated by the emperor himself, as it could be by any writer on

the events of this period. Germany had exhibited signs of dissatisfaction with the corrupt systems under which it laboured. It was expedient for the reigning sovereign to support those systems; and as he could not be present himself, it was further necessary that his authority should be delegated to some one whose interest in defending the axioms of ancient rule should be as great as his own.

A. D. 1531. It had been clearly foreseen by the protestants assembled at Smalcalde, that their opposition to Ferdinand could afford them no further advantage than that which might be looked for, from an exhibition of their principles, and the adoption of means for their defence. On the 29th of February *, they again met at Smalcalde; and, as they now had to consider the probable effects of Ferdinand's triumph, each came prepared for the discussion as a matter of immediate and personal concern. It is evident, from the nature of the subjects debated at this meeting, that danger was expected, and that it would require the employment of both men and money to put the protestant states in security.

But the league of Smalcalde was regarded with alarm by some of those who could not be suspected of indifference or cowardice. The king of Denmark had always evinced the most conscientious regard for the interests of religion; and had adopted the principles of the reformation at a period when it was far less evident, than at present, that they would obtain the support of a party sufficiently powerful to resist the overwhelming influence of Rome. But he saw the expediency of pausing before rendering himself responsible for the proceedings of a body which might bring into the field so mighty an enemy as the emperor, supported by the influence of the church, and the greatest princes of Europe. There were, he stated, many prelates in his dominions, whose opinions it would be dangerous for him to despise. They were connected with a portion of the nobility; had vast wealth at their command, and

* Sleidan says it was on March 29. — Liv. viii. p. 318.

numerous dependents ready to undertake any task which they might propose. It was only, however, as king of Denmark, that he was obliged to adopt these prudential considerations. As a prince of the empire, he professed himself willing to take part with the confederates, and support, to the utmost of his power, the great cause in which they were engaged.

Motives of a similar kind to those which influenced the king of Denmark, were alleged by other princes, and some of the reformed cities. It was scarcely a matter of conscience whether they should join the league or not. If they were willing to meet the threatened danger, and patiently endure the oppression with which they might be assailed, they would exhibit thereby an example of resignation, to which no one could object as an inferior proof of Christian fidelity. They might, therefore, properly claim the liberty of acting according to the circumstances in which they were placed, without being justly amenable to any charge of dishonesty or want of zeal; endurance being at least as true a sign of holiness, as resistance or contention.*

The assembly had not separated, when letters arrived from the emperor, calling upon the princes for assistance against the Turks, whose progress was as rapid as it was successful. To these letters an answer was returned, expressing sentiments similar to those already made known at Augsburg. They were willing, it was said, to bear whatever burdens might be imposed upon them by the necessity of the state; but desired the emperor to reconsider the nature of the measures which it was

* Luther's state at this time is strikingly illustrated by a passage in one of his letters to Justus Jonas: — "De me si quid triste audieris, non facile credas. Nam hac nocte quod non memini factum antea a me dormivi in latere dextro sex horas, cum soleam dormire in sinistro semper: ita fessus eram. Nam precedente nocte usque ad multam diem portavi lapides et ligna in inferno, non in Ægypto. Erat fornax illa non ferrea Ægypti, sed talis, quam non licit dicere, ut esse funus mihi viderer. Sed scribo hæc, ut videas verum esse, Christum esse regem virtutis in infirmitate, qui calida cum frigidis, dura cum molibus, mortem cum vita, peccatum cum justitia, denique omnia contraria cum contrariis, regere, temperare, et componere potest." — *Briefe*, t. iv. p. 229.

contemplated to enforce against them. The elector of Brandenburg, they continued, had spoken at Augsburg with such unmeasured violence, that his majesty had seen the necessity of modifying his statements: but though they had from time to time appealed to him against the undue power of the fiscal chamber, he had not deigned to accord an answer to their petitions; and they could only judge of his sentiments by the observation made to their deputies by the elector palatine, who declared that their addresses were useless, for that the emperor would take his own time to consider every part of the subject. They did not doubt, they said, that attention would, at length, be paid to their remonstrances; but the situation in which they were now placed, was one which demanded the most cautious procedure; and it ought scarcely to be expected that they should exhaust their states of money and arms for the war against the Turks, when they were threatened in their own houses with violence and oppression. Afford us, then, protection against the further proceedings of the fiscal chamber, and we will render the required assistance.*

Another meeting of the members of the league took place at Frankfort in the month of June. Letters in the interval had been received from the kings of France and England, to whom the confederates had applied for countenance and support. These answers were couched in the most cautious terms: expressed affection and respect, distrust and reproof; so that it would have been impossible for the acutest politician to say whether they might be looked upon as friends, or were to be dreaded as enemies.

It was a circumstance highly favourable to the steady progress of the reformation, that the protestant princes were joined in their efforts by large and wealthy cities. Popular enthusiasm excites to dangerous experiments; but when it willingly yields itself to the conduct of those most interested in the safety of the state, it only

* Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. i. Sleidan, t. i. lib. viii. p. 321.

serves to accelerate the progress of events, and bring about beneficial changes which might have been looked for in vain in the ordinary course of policy. The deputies from the free cities, assembled at Frankfort, opened the consultations by expressing their opinion that it would be unwise to encounter the danger of exciting a civil war by opposing the election of Ferdinand, which, in reality, had conferred upon him little more than an empty title. They observed further, that so long as the emperor lived, or remained within the bounds of the empire, he would continue to exercise supreme authority; and that even when Ferdinand was left to himself, he would still have to act according to the known wishes and principles of his superior: that hitherto they had done nothing which could be interpreted as a proceeding hostile to the state — their views and wishes having been confined to claims for religious liberty; whereas, should they engage in opposing the elevation of Ferdinand, reasons might be immediately found for charging them with the guilt of sedition.*

These arguments, to all appearance so reasonable and prudent, did not prevail with the princes. John Frederic professed his readiness to follow the example of his ancestors, in so far as due attention was paid to justice and the established laws of the empire: but both he and his allies declared that they would not accord to Ferdinand the title or dignity of king of the Romans; to neither of which he could pretend without violating their rights and privileges.

The assembly had not concluded its deliberations, when an intimation was given that the archbishop of Mentz and Louis, prince palatine, were willing to act as mediators between the emperor and the protestant party. This offer was accepted, after some consideration, and on the specially named condition, that the fiscal chamber should refrain from any oppressive attempt till the time of the conference.

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

Towards the end of the month of August, the elector of Saxony was visited by the counts of Nassau and Nüenar. In the course of their interview they advanced many arguments in favour of a compromise between the two parties ; and the manner in which they expressed their suspicion that the elector was inclined to unite with the sacramentarians, afforded him an opportunity of declaring in the strongest terms his rooted dislike to that body of his fellow reformers. The very circumstance that this declaration produced the most lively satisfaction on the part of his catholic advisers ought, at least, to have warned him that he was thereby giving an advantage to the enemies of protestantism, and weakening the force of the principles which they most dreaded to see established.

As a diet was to meet at Spire on the 13th of September, the counts urged the elector to be present at the assembly, or to send the prince as his representative. To this he replied with candour and firmness, that the events which had taken place at the former diets were little calculated to overcome the reason which age enabled him to offer as an excuse for his absence ; that at least a safe-conduct would have been necessary, had either he or his son intended to be present ; and that, still further, no circumstance whatever could induce him to undergo the privation of hearing the Gospel preached in its full and simple purity, or to sin against his conscience by observing any distinction between different kinds of meat. To this he added, that if the subject of religion was to be brought before the diet, he should deem it necessary to take Luther and other theologians with him, and that safe-conducts would be required as well for them as for himself. In conclusion, he reminded the mediating noblemen, that the emperor had refused to grant him the formal investiture of his states ; and that it was evident, as well from this as other circumstances, that his majesty entertained suspicions against him, for which there was no proper foundation. "But if," said he, "it should please

the emperor to allow me the privileges which I require, I will not fail to be present at the diet."

The general meeting of the protestant deputies, and those of the prince palatine, and the archbishop of Mentz, took place a few days after at Smalcalde. To the surprise of the former, it was proposed that the debates should be renewed from the point where they had ceased at Augsburg. The deputies immediately replied, that they had been desired to communicate to those who sent them an account of what might be demanded, and that they should act according to the instructions which they expected to receive. It was observed on this, that it had been supposed that no further conditions would be required for the conference than those which had been already granted, and that the emperor would have just cause to complain if the protestants were not prepared to offer any other concessions than those made at the last diet.* It was evident, from the tenor of the observations which fell from the envoys of the archbishop and the prince, that hopes had been entertained, that the protestants might be led into debate when they were unprepared for argument, and were represented not by learned theologians, but by men acquainted only with the conduct of affairs politically considered. The artifice was frustrated by the wise precaution of the deputies, and as neither party seemed willing to leave the ground on which it had taken its stand, the meeting was adjourned, with the intention of its being re-assembled at Spire.

The elector of Saxony and Philip of Hesse allowed a few weeks to elapse, and then addressed letters to the archbishop and the prince on the subject of the meeting. They insisted strongly on the uselessness of attempting to carry on a debate respecting points of doctrine, without the assistance of theologians; and, repeating their former declarations, begged them to be assured of their resolution to persevere in the profession of those truths which

* Sleidan.

they believed to be founded on Holy Writ. The emperor, they added, had promised to summon a general council. When that assembled, they would enter more fully into the explication of their opinions; and nothing should be wanting to prove how willing they were to act with charity and moderation. And if, in the meantime, his majesty would appoint a day for being present at Spire, they would not fail to attend him there, or to send deputies with full powers to declare their opinions and intentions, provided a safe-conduct, and liberty to preach and express themselves according to their consciences, were granted to them and Luther, whom they wished to take part in the assembly.

In the midst of these proceedings, the father of the reformation himself was steadily watching its progress, and supplying, from time to time, those supports to the developement of his grand idea which occasion seemed to require. At the close of the preceding year, he had published a book, entitled "Martin Luther's Admonition to his beloved Germans." * In this work he speaks in a tone of sorrow and complaint of the obstinacy with which the enemies of the reformation continued to prosecute their intolerant plans; and of the indifference which they showed to every offer of concession, to the conscientious scruples, and prayers of the protestants. It was to be feared, he said, that the result of all this would be tumults and seditions, but that the Lutherans would be free from the charge of exciting these disturbances; for it was their known principle to preach and to exercise patience and submission, even unto death, wherefore he trusted, that the Almighty would preserve them, as he had done in the late troubles. "But should I die," says he, "the pope will then find who Luther was; and that he, who living was a pest to him, will be death to him when dead. Many are the monks and bishops," he continues, "who will perish, and certainly for eternity; while I and the pious go to take up our abode in heaven, trusting to a conscience void of of-

* Sämtliche Schriften, t. xvi. p. 1950.

fence, and wholly untainted with the sin of heresy. The most violent of our adversaries are obliged to acknowledge that no article of the protestant confession opposes Scripture, or the rule of faith ; but certain ceremonies only, and the decrees of the popes, who have imbrued their hands in the blood of many innocent confessors. If war be attempted in this conjuncture of affairs, God will raise up some Maccabee, and it will have no better success than was the case with that which the Germans waged against the Bohemians." In alluding to Eckius and Fabius, he says that they were like bats, loving only obscurity and darkness ; and that, while the Confession was received with joy and applause, men heard their confutation of it with shame and sadness. Of the former of these champions of the Roman church, he speaks with all his wonted severity and bitterness. " That dishonest sycophant and sophist Eckius," says he, " feared not to say, in the hearing of our party, that if the emperor, acting according to the resolutions formed at Bologna, had attacked the Lutherans by arms, immediately on coming into Germany, and had put them to death wherever he chanced to find them, he would have done well ; but that all his good counsels were destroyed when he permitted the elector of Saxony to plead by his chancellor in favour of conciliation." Of the emperor, on the contrary, he speaks in terms of respect and loyalty, and repeats his saying, that if the priests had done their duty, there would have been no need of Luther. It was Ferdinand, he says, who prevented his giving that attention to the " Apology for the Confession," which it merited ; for his own disposition to mild proceedings was evinced in the reproof with which he repressed the violence of the elector of Brandenburg. He then states the reasons which might be employed to dissuade the emperor from war, and arranges them under three heads : the first referring to the intimate connection between the Gospel and the protestant confession ; the second, to the consequences which would result from a war carried on in favour of the Roman party, and which would

be nothing less than the re-establishment of the worst abuses of pontifical authority ; the third, to the purity of the doctrines taught by the protestants, when compared with the same doctrines corrupted by the ignorance and superstition in which they had been involved by the priests. In this section he speaks of the doctrine of justification by faith, which, he says, was the object of all the persecution raging against them, but which the gates of hell would never be able to overcome.

On the publication of the edict of Augsburg, Luther sent forth a paper, in which he endeavours to prove that the principles on which that edict was founded, were as contrary to right views of the church, as they were to Christian freedom.* To the so frequently repeated argument that the church could not err, he replies, that the church remained holy, although it might sometimes fall into error, as it is evident it does ; since “forgive us our sins,” is its universal prayer. The denial of the cup to the laity, was not, he says, the act of the church, but that of the corrupt and ambitious clergy, and that only of the Roman church. With respect to the order for the restriction of private masses, he shows how contrary was their use to the simplicity of the Gospel ; and adds, “We have the words of Christ : on these we rest, by these we live, and for these, by divine grace, we will die. These are the foundation of the true mass, not of that which is bought and sold. These require not that we should offer up a sacrifice to God, that we should honour the saints by a sacrament, or attempt to redeem souls from purgatory, or pay for each other by the mass. The only proper efficacy and fruit of the sacrament are described in those words of Christ, ‘To you it is given for the remission of sins.’ To this, the clamours of the pope concerning the sacrifice of the mass can add nothing, nor can the contrary observation of the whole church diminish its authority. The institution

* Sämtliche Schriften, t. xvi. p. 2016

of Christ remains." Alluding again to the doctrine of justification by faith, he repays with the boldest censure what was said in the Confutation respecting the rejection of good works from the religion of protestants, and adds, "This article shall neither emperor, nor Roman, nor Turk, nor Tartar, overturn. Nor shall the pope, with all the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and nuns, overturn it: nor kings, princes, dynasties; nor all the world, with all the devils; but they shall receive infernal fire, the reward of their contradiction. So do I, doctor Luther, declare, the Holy Spirit inspiring me; and this is the true Gospel."

On the subject of ecclesiastical dignitaries, he says, "Our associates declared at Augsburg, and I have repeated the same sentiment, that we are ready to recognise their authority, if they will leave the Gospel free, and reform abuses. For we know that those abuses are enormous, and that, notwithstanding their existence, the Gospel must be preached, and we must live and die for the gospel. Let this be allowed, and it would be easy to treat concerning prebends and the constituting of pastors, and to find a remedy for all existing evils. But they have not only refused these things, but seek to oppress the Gospel by the force of their authority, and to slay, or drive into exile, those pious Christians who espouse its cause."

In reply to the direction that the Gospel was to be taught according to the interpretation of the doctors, acknowledged by the universal church, he says, "And who are the doctors received by the church at large? Are they Eckius, Faber, Cochläus? Or Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory, Hillary?"

An anonymous writer of Dresden attacked him, at this time, on the subject of his supposed disloyalty to the emperor: but he replies, that no one had ever more strongly inculcated the duty of obedience to magistrates than he had done. He confesses, that he believed that no one could be obliged to obey the emperor, or any other power, if he commanded him to take up arms

against true religion and justice ; and he acknowledges that he had not repented of this opinion, which was supported by the example of St. Maurice, who, with 10,000 of his fellow soldiers, met death rather than obey the emperor, who desired them to do what they accounted unholy.* To the assertion of the writer, that neither the emperor nor the princes had meditated a war against the protestants, Luther replies, that he did, indeed, hope the best things from the emperor, who was far more benignant and tolerant than those who prompted him to acts of cruelty, and were now raging because he seemed unwilling to accede to their sanguinary plans. With regard to the suspicion that the Lutherans were themselves preparing for war, he says that he was himself ignorant of the matter ; and acknowledges, — somewhat contradicting thereby his early sentiments on the subject, — that even if they did take up arms, they could not properly be accused of sedition and rebellion, for that it was not unlawful to defend themselves against unjust aggressions. The intentions of the pope, however, were proved, he adds, by what had taken place at Bologna between him and the emperor, and by the instances of cruelty which had been perpetrated against private individuals, which, were they to be attempted in the case of the princes, must needs provoke a war, for neither the elector of Saxony, nor the landgrave of Hesse, would fear the sword of such enemies. He then alludes to the expressions which had fallen from the lips of the duke George, of Eckius, of the elector of Brandenburg, and others, and more especially to the general desire which had been manifested on the part of the catholics, for the arrival of Charles. “How often,” says he, “did they exclaim, The Saviour comes ! the

* He is so clear on this point in his treatise on Christian Liberty, that it is surprising how even an enemy could have accused him of upholding seditious principles. He states two propositions, both of which the scriptural reader will allow are to be found in the Bible. The first is, that the Christian is master of all things, is free, and subject to no man ; but the second is, that the Christian is the servant of, and subject to, all men : that is, he says, the Christian is free as to his soul, and depends on no one ; but as to his body and his actions, is subject to all the world.” — *De Libert. Christ.* t. ii. fol. 3.

Saviour comes ! And was it not continually proclaimed that, before the feast of St. Michael, the Lutherans would be ruined ?” Faber, he affirms, publicly said, that a council was certainly required for the correction of abuses in the church, but that the Lutherans ought first to be put down by force, lest the reformation should seem to have been the work of a single miserable monk.*

Affairs in Switzerland were as little exempt from the evil influence of a hostile power as they were in Germany. Though less amenable to the authority of the pope, and free from the direct interference of the emperor, the protestant cantons saw in the conduct of their former allies the most active spirit of Roman zeal, intolerance, and subtlety. It was easy to discover that Swiss catholicism, if left to itself, would have been too much modified by its conjunction with free civil institutions, to allow of its assuming the terrific forms of destructive intolerance so common to its nature in other countries. But the policy of Rome had freer course among a few small states, when once permitted to assail them, than it was likely to enjoy where the wealth and extent of a country might in some degree counterbalance the weight of any foreign influence. The catholic cantons had, from the beginning of the reformation, evinced such a degree of intolerance towards Zurich, and those which followed its example, that an observer of events might, at a very early period, have prognosticated the rising of a storm ruinous to the peace and prosperity of the country. Thus the assemblies formed for the purpose of considering the points in dispute only led to an increase of mutual distrust. The one party, confident in its numbers and apparent strength, assumed to itself the right of domination ; and the other, believing in the justice of its cause, reasoned and acted in the spirit of a sect which had always to expect the sufferings of persecution, and had ample reason to regard its opponents as enemies to its freedom and the general interests of humanity.

* Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. 2. p. 8.

The increase of the evangelical party did not lessen the danger of an open and sanguinary conflict. While it gave a higher feeling of confidence to the followers of Zuingle, it took from them the characteristics of a body in which faith, humility, and earnest communion with the Father of mercies were the chief supports to exertion. The opposite party, in the mean time, saw the necessity of adopting measures which would enable it effectually to resist any attempt at retaliating on its own meditated oppressions. A state of things like this could not continue long without producing deplorable disorders; nor can the history of religion present a more melancholy example of the effects of zealotry and intolerance, than that afforded by this portion of the history of Switzerland. The brotherhood formed by the union of the cantons was as a soil especially prepared for the planting of the highest virtues which can be cherished by civilisation and rational freedom. In many respects the results were such as the most patriotic of the people desired; but it was soon found that tares had been plentifully sown among the wheat, and that it was more likely they would overrun and choke the good seed, than that a hand would be stretched forth sufficiently bold to root them up.

Insults of the grossest kind had been passed upon the followers of Zuingle when they appeared in any of the catholic cantons. In Underwald the authorities allowed the people to place the arms of Zurich and its associates on a gibbet for public scorn and ridicule: and it was well known that a confederacy had been formed, with Ferdinand at its head, for making a far more serious attack on the honour and liberties of the reformers.

The state of Zurich and Berne, both abounding in wealthy and noble-minded citizens, was not such as to render it probable that this conduct on the part of their enemies would pass unnoticed or unresisted. Having published a manifesto, complaining of the treatment they had so unjustly received, they proclaimed their deter-

mination to defend themselves by arms against the further insults of the confederate cantons. A civil war was thus about to be commenced in a country which owed its only chance of freedom to the union of its people. The troops on each side were speedily put in motion, and a battle was hourly expected, when Strasburg interfered and succeeded in effecting a seeming reconciliation. The principal conditions of the treaty were, that war should not be again excited on account of religion, and that both parties should for the future refrain from injurious expressions and all acts of oppression, whether direct or indirect.

Two years had passed away since the signing of this treaty. The causes in which the dispute originated still existed, and had gathered strength from numerous intervening events. Berne and Zurich, therefore, again made preparations for hostilities; and early in the year the principal passes to the other cantons were occupied by their troops. An attempt at accommodation, undertaken by the king of France and some cantons not engaged in the quarrel, wholly failed of success. It was proposed by the mediating party that the injuries committed on both sides should be mutually forgotten; that those who had been exiled on account of religion should be recalled; and that the five cantons, while continuing in their ancient profession, should not prohibit to any of their people the reading of the Scriptures.*

It would be difficult to discover in these articles of the proposed treaty the reasons which induced its rejection on the part of the five cantons opposed to Berne and Zurich. The two latter published on the 9th of September a statement of their case, and insisted strongly that the grievances under which they laboured were

* Hist. de la Reform. de Suisse. Fleury says, that Zuingle put himself forward in this affair, and, notwithstanding the advice of his friends, desired to act as general of the army. This statement is not correct: Zuingle simply followed the custom of former times; and, if he had wished, might have justified himself by the example of many a Roman prelate, and even by that of popes. — *Fleury*, t. xxvii. l. 133, p. 113.

amply sufficient to justify them in the course which had been taken.

The policy of Berne and Zurich consisted in preventing the supply of provisions to the hostile cantons ; and the latter were thereby reduced to the alternative of either relaxing in their resolution not to accept the terms of the accommodation, or immediately commencing a vigorous attack on the reformed confederates. Adopting the measures most adapted to their present state of feeling, they prepared for war ; and carried on their plans so cautiously, that their troops had reached the neighbourhood of Zurich before the people of that canton were aware of their movement. The few soldiers dispersed along the frontiers formed a force wholly insufficient to resist the approach of the enemy ; and messengers were despatched to the city, calling for immediate succours. Consternation seized the less courageous of the citizens ; while those on whose energy and bravery the canton depended for its safety, seemed roused to desperation by the alarming situation in which it was so unexpectedly placed. Such forces as could be armed at the moment were instantly led towards the scene of action ; but scarcely had they reached the summit of a mountain, overlooking the position occupied by their companions, when they beheld them falling on all sides beneath the swords of the enemy. A narrow and precipitous opening among the rocks was the only path by which a descent could be made to the spot where the battle had commenced. It was at once perceived that to attempt the passage in sight of the enemy would be to expose the whole to destruction : but no time remained for taking a safer course. Many were the mangled corpses which already strewed the earth ; and as the few who remained to carry on the unequal contest received the repeated attacks of their assailants, they seemed to look bitter reproaches on the tardiness of their fellow citizens. Inflamed at the melancholy spectacle, the soldiers which had lately arrived on the height leaped from the rocks, and de-

scended, one by one, as they best could, to the valley. But they only arrived in time to see almost the last of their companions die, covered with wounds ; and, unable to form themselves into a line, they speedily shared the same fate.

In the midst of the band which had been thus hastily summoned to the field, was Zuingle himself. Ancient custom required the minister of religion to attend his countrymen to battle ; and Zuingle had too high a sense of honour as well as duty to shrink from that which his fellow citizens demanded of him at such an hour, whatever might have been his present opinion of the propriety of the claim. He attended his people on this occasion with the enthusiasm of a patriot and the love of a father ; and when he saw them bleeding, he exposed himself in the same manner as they did to the slaughtering swords of the enemy, and fell covered with wounds.

Such was the end of Ulric Zuingle, a man whose name will remain venerable among posterity as long as genius and profound and enlightened piety are regarded as the chief ornaments of human nature. He commenced the reformation of religion in his country from motives the purity of which could hardly be disputed. It was in the active discharge of his duty, as a minister of the Gospel, that he learnt how much had to be done to enlighten the minds of men on the subject of Christian truth ; and the desire to remove those obstacles which he found to this great end in his own narrow sphere of exertion, was the ground of all his proceedings, — the principle which animated him from the first, to the last effort which he made for the diffusion of the Gospel and the correction of abuses.

CHAP. XIII.

EFFORTS AT CONCILIATION BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND THE PROTESTANTS. — DISPUTES RESPECTING THE ELECTION OF FERDINAND. — PROPOSALS MADE BY THE REFORMERS. — PROSPECTS OF A GENERAL COUNCIL. — REMARKS THEREUPON. — OPINION OF ERASMUS ON THE SUBJECT — GEORGE OF SAXONY AND LUTHER. — ADVANCE OF PROTESTANTISM.

A. D. 1532. THE war with the Turks demanded an attention on the part of the emperor which could not well be divided between the field of battle and the council chamber. It was a season for action instead of debate; and the peace of Christendom would have been promoted in no slight degree, had Charles deferred his communications with the Roman pontiff for a time, and, proceeding at once to Germany, had summoned the princes to their station in the army before engaging with them in dispute on the subject of their faith. Success against the common enemy would have given to each party a more placable and brotherly disposition, and thus increased the means of those who earnestly sought the true interests of their religion and their country. A defeat, on the other hand, must have taught the emperor and his party that the reformers could not be treated as schismatics at such a period without endangering the safety of the state, the security of which, it would have been now obvious, must depend on the firm union of its several members.

But a different course had been pursued; and Charles had, in consequence, to contend with a domestic foe of his own creating, and one not less powerful and determined than the one which he had to meet in hostile array. His apprehension at the progress of the Turks had induced him to defer the meeting of the diet, summoned for September in the past year, to the beginning

of the present. Early in January he set out on his way to Ratisbonne, in which city the diet was to hold its assemblies; and in the course of his route he had conferences with the archbishop of Mentz and the elector palatine, who strongly urged him to allow a renewal of the discussion on the grand points of debate between the two parties. Charles yielded to their persuasions; and his consent being gained, they forthwith addressed the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse on the same subject; and it was finally agreed that a meeting should be held on the 1st of April, at Schweinfurt.

The distinguished men who had undertaken to promote a reconciliation, notwithstanding the previous failures of so many similar attempts, came to the conference authorised to make proposals in the name of the emperor for effecting this important purpose. Of the conditions offered, the principal were, — that the protestants should neither publish nor teach any thing not contained in the Confession of Augsburg; that they should have no communion with the Zuinglians or the anabaptists; that they should make no attempt, under the plea of religion, to draw to their party the subjects of other princes; that they should not allow their preachers to teach the doctrines they professed beyond the boundaries of their own states; that they should neither disturb the established ecclesiastical jurisdiction, nor attack the rites and ceremonies of the church; that they should furnish succours against the Turks; submit themselves to the decrees of the state; obey the emperor and the king of the Romans; and renounce any confederation which might have been made against either the one or the other, or against the orders of a different religion. It was added, in conclusion, that if the protestants were ready to accept these conditions, a hope might be entertained that the emperor and the king of the Romans would forget all past offences.*

There was an appearance of moderation in the proposals thus made, which might have led a less expe-

* Sleidan, t. i. lib. viii. p. 336. Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. 4.

rienced order of men than the German reformers to accept them as the basis of a permanent peace. But to those accustomed to weigh the sentiments and motives whereby men of firm principles and ardent piety are usually actuated, it will not seem surprising that the offers of the emperor were regarded with somewhat of coldness and suspicion. It was contrary to the spirit of protestantism to bind itself not to speak of truth because it might be disagreeable to the ears of princes ; and Christianity itself would appear to have been unlawfully published, were obedience to some of the restrictions above stated the measure of a just and reasonable loyalty.

But Charles had plainly a great political object to carry, in his present attempt to bend the protestants to his wishes. Notwithstanding the election of Ferdinand, and the acknowledgment of his right by the catholic princes, it was felt that the resistance of the protestants must, at least, greatly diminish the lustre of his dignity, and prevent the full efficiency of the measures which the emperor hoped to carry by the elevation of his brother. By attempting, on the other hand, to secure a political purpose, while seeming only to seek the religious tranquillity of the country, he alarmed the fears of every class of the people except those who were blindly wedded to his interests. Accidental circumstances had combined the question of Ferdinand's election with the disputes between the catholics and protestants, and had made them respectively his supporters and his adversaries ; but there was nothing which rendered the conduct of Charles in this measure essentially less opposed to the rights and freedom of the former than it was to those of the latter. In both cases a privilege had been injured which formed, in many respects, a powerful bulwark to the liberties of the empire against the plots and aggressions of ambitious politicians.

The emperor had opened the diet at Ratisbonne ; and that assembly was in the midst of its proceedings, when the messengers despatched by the mediating

princes at Schweinfurt arrived with an account of the determination to which the debates of the conference had been brought. To the conditions on which security was offered, the protestants objected, as involving a violation of their liberty, both as members of the state and enlightened Christians. In regard to the acknowledgment of Ferdinand as king of the Romans, they observed, that his elevation had taken place in direct opposition to the bull of gold, which stated that a king of the Romans should not be created during the life of the emperor, without the consent of the electors and six other princes of the empire. It was further declared, that should it at any time appear necessary to adopt such a course, the archbishop of Mentz was to assemble the electors and princes in a place suited for safe deliberation, and that if they concluded in favour of the appointment, the electors, together with the king of Bohemia, were then to proceed to the election: that the new king of the Romans should only act in the name of the emperor; nor receive any oath of fidelity from the orders of the empire till after the death of that sovereign: that, to avoid creating a prescriptive right, not more than three kings of the Romans should be chosen in succession from the same family: that neither the emperor himself nor the king of the Romans should be allowed to change these regulations of the bull of gold: that when it appeared necessary to the electors to create a king of the Romans, they should not be required to acquaint the emperor with their determination, or to leave it in his power to direct the archbishop of Mentz to convoke the assembly of their order; but that, when it seemed good to elect a king of the Romans, the archbishop should call a meeting of the electors at Frankfort, and at no other place, except by the especial permission of the electors, and for important reasons: that the archbishop should not be allowed to require of the inhabitants of Nuremberg, except with the consent of his colleagues, the crown and sceptre, or any other of the imperial ornaments: that the term of three

months, appointed to intervene between the summoning and assembling of the electors, should not be shortened ; and that if any of the particulars here stated should be neglected, the electors should not be obliged to attend the summons to Frankfort, or, if there, should be allowed to depart, and that the whole of the proceedings should be declared null and void : that the king of the Romans should not be consecrated except in the presence of the electors, or their deputies ; and that the emperor should set aside whatever had been done in opposition to these principles.

To the particulars here stated, it was added, that if the emperor would confirm the bull of Charles IV., according to this, its received sense, the elector of Saxony would readily yield, in other respects, to the wishes of his majesty ; but that if the latter did not give his assent to such an interpretation of the instrument, he would willingly consent to its being submitted to the decision of competent and legitimate judges, on the especial condition, however, that Ferdinand should not assume the right of exercising any authority in the administration of affairs till their decision was made known. Should the emperor consent to neither of these propositions, it was next to be requested, that he would allow the complaining party to plead their cause before him and the assembled orders of the empire, and to state the reasons on which they founded their objection to the election of his brother. Lastly, they apologised for the steps which they found it would be necessary to take to prevent their being regarded in foreign countries as enemies to loyalty and good government. Their communication with other states was only designed, they said, to prove that they were guilty of no such crimes as those laid to their charge.*

The mediating princes took upon themselves the duty of replying to these demands on the part of the elector of Saxony and his associates. They would not, they said, dispute a question which concerned, not them

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

alone, but the emperor, king Ferdinand, and every prince of the empire: yet whilst they professed their willingness that the matter should be referred to a competent tribunal, if such were the wish of the elector of Saxony, they remarked that they feared any communication with the emperor on this subject would not only be attended with no effect, but would prevent altogether the prospect of a reconciliation. This being the case, they earnestly entreated the elector of Saxony and the prince, his son, to consent to measures which might save them from consequences destructive to the happiness of the country. If they acceded to these conciliatory exhortations, they might hope every thing, it was added, from the feelings of the emperor and king Ferdinand, who would not fail to take such precautions as seemed most fitted to secure the rights and privileges of all: it might also be confidently hoped that they would forget whatever had passed, and attend especially to the affairs of the elector of Saxony, and concede to him, even in religion, as much as was, in any degree, consistent with their duty. It was, however, particularly observed at the conclusion of the address, that the prospect of an arrangement in matters of religious dispute must depend on the determination taken respecting the election of king Ferdinand.*

Increasing years and infirmities obliged the elector of Saxony to leave a large part of the conduct of public affairs, at this time, in the hands of his son. That prince replied to the mediating council by stating, that he had not expected such an answer to the remonstrances of his father and his allies, as that above described: that those who took upon themselves the character of mediators ought not to decide or defend, but simply to propose that which seemed likely to conciliate; and that if the emperor finally rejected the

* Sleidan. Luther's letters at this period are valuable, and prove how truly anxious he was to prevent any occurrence which might injure the progress of the Gospel. "All would be stopped," says he, "by the disturbance of peace. The Gospel would be injured, and even, perhaps, torn from us in case of a war."—*Briefe*, tom. iv. p. 336.

demands proposed by the complaining party, the appeal would be made to a tribunal which, it might be expected, would decide according to justice.

The substance of the proposals then made to the mediators by the whole collected body of reformers was as follows:—“ That those who had presented the Confession at Augsburg, with its subsequent apology, would confine themselves strictly within the limits of the declarations which they contained: that, in respect to doctrine, they would not join themselves to those who held different opinions on the subject of baptism and the Lord's supper: that they would not make religion a pretext for drawing into their party the subjects of other states; but that, if the subjects of those states were free to go whither it pleased them, they should not now be denied that liberty, and that it should be lawful to receive them after proper notification given to their superiors: that they would not send preachers into other states without the consent of the magistrates: that it should be lawful for them when assembled in any city, for the purpose of attending the diet of the empire, or when proceeding with the army against the Turks, to avail themselves of the ministry of their own teachers, and to receive the Lord's Supper according to the institution of Jesus Christ: that they should refrain from all injurious language; but that the ministers of the church must be allowed to rebuke, in a spirit of moderation and charity, the vices and errors of their times: that those who professed the reformed doctrines should not be excluded from the chamber of the empire: that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction should remain as it was, but that the bishops should not be permitted to vex or oppress the protestants: that none of the edicts passed on the subject of religion should be put in execution till it was known what would be the decision of a general council: that they should enjoy the estates and revenues of the church who occupied the posts to which they properly belonged: that no person should be deprived of his

rights by violence: and, lastly, that, in respect to political matters, every one should perform the duties which properly belonged to his office and his station; and that each party should, for the future, endeavour to act in the spirit of conciliation and friendship."

Another meeting of the assembly, convened for the purpose of re-establishing concord, was summoned for the 3d of June, at Nuremberg. The emperor, it appears, had by this time learnt somewhat of the inflexible character of the reformers; and the position in which he was placed by the successes of the Turks compelled him to yield to the necessity of the times. In the course of the proceedings at Ratisbonne, he informed the diet, that he had some time back sent an ambassador to the pope and the college of cardinals, and that he had communicated the answer of his holiness to the king of France, who agreed with him on the necessity of calling a general council. He added, that great difficulties were created by the sentiments of the pope respecting the manner of summoning, and the choice of a place for the meeting of, the proposed assembly; that he had not, therefore, been able to come to a conclusion on the subject; but that as the disputes respecting religion continued to increase, and create fresh dangers every day, he intended to employ his influence to secure the assembling of the council in the place best suited for that purpose, and to effect such other objects as seemed most likely to secure the return of tranquillity.

It was in the spirit of this address, that Charles at length agreed to the advice of the mediating princes, and proclaimed that no person should thenceforth be interrupted in the observance of his religion, till the meeting of the council, or at least till the orders of the empire had provided some method for the healing of the wounds inflicted by the present disorders. To prove his earnestness and sincerity in this matter, he declared that the severest punishments should follow any breach of this edict, and that whatever measures

had been commenced against the protestants should be considered null and void.*

The equivalent which the reformers gave, in return for this assurance of at least temporary security, consisted in the promise of affording succours against the Turks, and such other instances of loyalty and obedience as the exigency of the times might render necessary. Their answer to the emperor, dated July 23., was signed by seven princes, and the deputies of twenty-four cities, and on the 2d of the next month it was ratified by Charles himself.

These arrangements having been made, and all parties being now equally convinced of the dangers with which they were threatened, and of the necessity of meeting them with courage and promptitude, the diet broke up on the 27th of July, and the most distinguished members of that august assembly immediately proceeded to summon their people to attend them to the field. In the midst of these preparations, that is, on the 13th of August, the protestant party was deprived of one of its chief ornaments and supports, by the death of the elector of Saxony. He was succeeded by his son, John Frederic, whose Christian heroism, it will be seen, rendered him well worthy of inheriting the dignity enjoyed by his two venerable predecessors.

A fierce and sanguinary conflict seemed to be at hand. The Turks had reached the town of Gratz, a place in Styria; and the emperor, by the advice of his ministers and auxiliaries, pitched his camp in the vicinity of Vienna. Both armies awaited, in anxious suspense, the signal of their respective leaders to begin the contest; but they were not destined, on this occasion, to try their strength. The Turkish chief, after looking for some favourable opportunity to attack the enemy, found that he was both losing his time, and uselessly encountering

* When the emperor received the document which contained the demands of the reformers, he is said to have inquired, before the packet was opened, "Are the Lutherans content?" On the secretary answering in the affirmative, he said, "Give me the pen, then;" seeming, says Fluery, to intimate thereby his impatience to free himself from the obstacles which opposed his war with the Turks. — Liv. 134. n. 26.

the perils of remaining in the heart of the enemy's country. Charles was too experienced a soldier to allow himself to be surprised, or to venture on any step which might lessen the imposing grandeur of his position. He appeared at the head of a vast and renowned armament, prepared, as it seemed, to execute any design which might free the country from the insults of its foes. His name and presence were mighty adversaries to the proud hopes which had been excited on the part of the invaders ; and Solymán took the remarkable and unexpected decision of retreating without a battle.

The emperor availed himself of the leisure now afforded him to visit Italy, and hold a conference with the pope on the subject of the council. Of the results of this interview, we have a partial report in the address of the pontiff's nuncio, the bishop of Regio, to the new elector of Saxony. After descanting on the piety and paternal wishes of his chief, the bishop observed, that the emperor had hoped, when passing from Italy into Germany, that he would be able to subdue, by his presence, the disorders of the state ; but that he had failed in these his hopes, and, on his return to Italy, had strongly insisted on the necessity of a general council ; that in this wish he was joined by the princes of Germany, and now also by the sovereign pontiff himself, who assented to the proposal, as well through his desire to conciliate the favour of the emperor, as on account of his anxiety to promote the happiness of the republic. " I now inform you," added the nuncio, " in the name of his holiness, that such are his wishes and his determinations : but as the nature of the subject demands attentive consideration, he has delayed his decision on points connected therewith, as on the manner of calling the council, the time and place of its meeting, and the order of its proceedings—particulars which require the most careful notice, to secure the freedom of the assembly, and render it conformable to those which were held by the fathers of the church, and under the direction of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it to be forgotten, that means

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must be adopted to secure the promises of those who assist at the council, that its decisions shall be final, and that its authority shall not be afterwards disputed, so as to destroy the efficacy of its labours, and the hopes of those who regard it as the means of peace and union." The nuncio further remarked, that his holiness had carefully considered what place would be best adapted for the important purpose of receiving the assembly, and that he had fixed on Bologna, Placentia, or Mantua. Then again alluding to the necessity of securing obedience to the decrees of the council, he added, that if the kings and princes interested in its acts should agree to these considerations, the pontiff would, within six months, give notice of the intended meeting, and appoint its assembling a year after, that time might be given for the collecting of provisions, and for making arrangements demanded by the expected greatness of the assembly.*

To this address of the legate the minister of the emperor, by whom he was accompanied, added, that his master had given his full assent to the opinions of the pope on the several points to which allusion had been made, and that he trusted the elector would agree, with all fidelity and good-will, to the united wishes of his holiness and the emperor.

John Frederic combined in his character the experience of a cautious statesman with the virtues of the Christian, and excused himself from replying at once to the address of his distinguished visitors. At the end of a few days, he explained to the nuncio the reasons which obliged him to defer his answer to a more distant period. A numerous body of persons, he said, had been joined with his father in making the confession of faith at Augsburg, and he was, therefore, not at liberty to decide any matter of importance before consulting the general feeling and wishes of the party. He rejoiced at the determination which had been taken by the pope and the emperor to call a council; and as a meeting had

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

been appointed for the month of June, at Smalcalde, he would, immediately after learning the sentiments of his associates there assembled, acquaint the pontiff and the emperor with the conclusions to which they had arrived.

The meeting to which the elector alluded was held at the time appointed, and an answer was sent to the nuncio, drawn up in the name of the numerous reformers present at the assembly. "We render our sincerest thanks to the emperor," they said, "for his determination in favour of a general council, and for the labour he has employed to promote the glory of God, and the safety of the republic. May God prosper the design and direct the steps of his majesty, so that he may aid the triumph of truth, the abolition of false doctrines and superstitious practices, and thereby promote the revival of the pure worship of God, and the virtue and holiness which ought to be the ornaments of his church." Having thus expressed their feelings on the general subject, they proceed to speak on the particular points of the nuncio's address. It had been determined, they say, that in consequence of the pope's having condemned their doctrine, a free and Christian council should be held, either for all Christendom, or for Germany alone. This had been expressly stated, first, in order that neither the opinions nor power of the pope, or any other authority, might interfere with the proper consideration of their cause; and, secondly, lest an attempt should be made to decide the points in dispute by the decrees of the popes, and the opinion of the schoolmen, and not by the authority of Scripture. The observation thus made is supported by this reasonable inquiry, — Of what use can any effort against the authority of the pope be, if the Bible is not allowed to be the source of certain intelligence on Christian doctrine and practice? That it would be expedient to hold the council in Germany, was allowed, say the authors of the reply, by the emperor himself; but the efforts of the pope had contradicted the decrees of the diet, sealed as though

they were with the seals of the emperor and the princes. The pope (they continue) pretended, indeed, to favour the calling of a free council, but he seemed to have intentions which would wholly subvert the freedom of the assembly: for what other effect could be expected from the efforts which he made to unite the king and princes on his side? There was, in fact, strong reason to believe that he only sought, under the shadow of a general council, to establish his own authority, and to prevent the reformation of those errors and vices under which they had so long groaned. They could not tell, say they, what would be the determination of others on this matter, but the proposal which had been made by the pontiff seemed far more calculated to deter than to invite the attendance of the reformers at the council: for it would be manifestly an act of extreme folly on their part, to bind themselves to acknowledge the authority of an assembly of which they knew not yet either the form or the method; or whether its design was not simply to favour the establishment of the pope's authority and that of his partisans; whether he was willing that the points in dispute should be determined by an appeal to Scripture, or had resolved that they should be referred to traditions and laws which had no foundation in Holy Writ. In respect to the demand of the pontiff, that the council should be held according to ancient custom, — this, say they, was only made in order to conceal his intentions, and to pervert the proper design of the assembly; for, in some of the later councils, every thing had been determined by the decrees and authority of the popes, which was not the means by which the peace of the church could be restored, or afflicted consciences comforted, but calculated rather to confirm and increase that servitude and darkness under which they had so long suffered. The obligations which he intended to impose upon the members of the council would prove, it was said, the most grievous snare to their consciences, seeing that it was impossible for them to

arrive at a just decision on the points in dispute, unless they were left unfettered in judgment, and at perfect freedom to decide according to its dictates. "If the pope insists on pursuing his present purpose, we place our cause," said the authors of this document, "in the hands of God, who will defend his doctrine, and the purity of his worship; and, should the pontiff be allowed to assemble a council according to his own will and pleasure, which, we trust, will not be the case, we will then consider what it is our duty to do, and whether we may attend the meeting, under proper assurances of safety, and on this condition, that we be not obliged to acknowledge the authority of a council which is held contrary to the decrees of the empire. This being the case, we earnestly request that the emperor and the pope may be made acquainted with our sentiments, and that the former may refrain from any harsh judgment against us, but endeavour to procure a council, held according to the decrees of the empire, and in which every thing shall be decided by the opinion of free, pious, and independent men. It is the interest of the emperor to employ his power and influence in extending the preaching of the Gospel, and not to assist in furthering the cruelties of those who for so many years have persecuted innocent men — for this cause only, that they profess the doctrines of salvation. Finally," say they, "we rest our confidence on the emperor alone, and are ready to prove our affection and loyalty by every thing, except the violating of our conscience and our faith." *

Such were the sentiments which prevailed among the protestants at this period. They appear to have been amply justified in their suspicions of the pontiff, not only by the long known policy of the papal court, but from the tenor of the message which announced his willingness to summon a council. It must be confessed, how-

* Sleidan.* Luther: Briefe, t. iv. The thoughts and suspicions of Luther are given at some length in this document. He insists strongly on the distinction between a council held according to primitive example and according to custom: the former implying God's word as the rule, the latter the darkness of men.

ever, that the reformers had little reason to be astonished at the efforts which he was said to be making to enlist in his cause the most influential of the European powers. To have neglected this precaution when an active party were about to strike at the foundations of his authority, and probably attempt an entire change of the constitution of the church, would have been to give up the principles for which the Roman hierarchy had contended from age to age, and which it was not to be supposed could appear less important in the eyes of the present pope than in those of his predecessors. The most suspicious circumstance in the demands of the pontiff was his so earnestly insisting on choosing the place of meeting, and fixing on one of three cities, all within the immediate range of his authority, and a sojourn in which could not but be disagreeable, and even perilous, to some of the reformers.*

A new subject for deep and careful consultation was now brought before the Christian world. The doctrines of the two great parties into which it was divided had been examined by the heads of each in close and subtle debate. Scarcely a province in Europe was without its little synod of learned protestants, full of the life and energy of a youthful church. Nor did the champions of the established faith show any inclination to shrink from the contest to which they were roused by the zeal of the reformers. If they had been allowed to keep the Bible closed, these encounters might have been continued till each had discovered that the mere theoretical discussion of theology was as little likely to favour a sober confession of faith on the one side as on the other. But this would have been akin to the assigning of a large portion of mankind to the dominion of infidelity or superstition. The discovery, that conviction

* That it was not the protestants only who had driven the pope to conclude that a council was necessary, is plain from this, that when the principal cardinals assembled, some time after, to consider the state of the church, they began their address to the pontiff with a thanksgiving to God, for having inspired him with the design of restoring the discipline of the church, and removing abuses caused by the vices and tyranny of his predecessors.—*Du Pin, Eccles. Hist.* c. xxvi.

cannot be arrived at by the exercise of those natural faculties to which we must in reality wholly trust, if we refuse the appeal to Scripture, is the grand source of religious apostacy in every age. The Roman catholics, therefore, by their unwillingness, manifested on many occasions, to admit the Bible in their disputes, favoured the growth of an evil which even the least pious of any body of Christians could not have contemplated without sorrow. Arguments founded on the knowledge given by revelation must surely appear the more valid when shown to be in close conformity with the written word of God; and if it be allowed by Christians of every denomination, that an acquaintance with the doctrines of salvation cannot be obtained where there is no revelation, the plain inference seems to be, that every doctrine proposed for belief as essential to our justification may be found set forth in the Bible, and propounded there in terms exactly measuring its latitude, and proper applications as an article of Christian faith.

The disputations which had hitherto been carried on between the two parties were on this and some other accounts little calculated to give satisfaction to ingenuous and really inquisitive minds. There was an evident mixture of motives in the minds of controversialists as well at this as at other periods of religious excitement; and the meetings of provincial or partial assemblies afforded constant occasion for the collision of feelings which had little to do with the sentiment proper to religious inquiry. A general council, on the other hand, presented the prospect of furthering the cause of truth in a manner far superior to that afforded by any inferior tribunal. In such an assembly, if properly conducted, neither national prejudice nor the confederacies of particular sets of churchmen, it might be supposed, could prevail to the injury of the grand cause for which it was summoned. The learned men of all nations, the most esteemed teachers of the common faith,

the heads of the Roman church in every country, and the leaders of the reformation not only in Germany, but wherever its seed had been sown, would be there to unfold their views — to employ their powers of reasoning, — and exercise the influence due to their piety, for the establishment of a firm and holy concord. Such a meeting might well be desired by all who had no greater wish than that of seeing the value of the Gospel asserted, and the best means employed for the publication of its doctrines. The previous arrangements necessary to secure the proper conduct of its discussions could only be the work of the few in authority. To have put them under general management, would have been to suppose the existence of a power which it was the object to create in the assembling of a council. This was the source of the doubts and difficulties under which both parties had now to labour: the one seeing how much it must lose by submitting its principles to the demands of the reformers; and the latter feeling convinced that, unless they were allowed to insist on such points as seemed necessary to establish the freedom of the council, they would probably be placed in a worse condition by its decisions than that in which they stood at the beginning of the reformation.

Erasmus regarded the summoning of a general council with intense interest. Notwithstanding his disputes with Luther, and the alliances which he had formed with Henry VIII. and other catholic princes, his acute intellect, and the grand superiority which he could not fail to assert above the vulgar prejudices of intolerant priests, brought him into a position in which he necessarily shared with the protestants in many of their wishes and anxieties. The cause of learning and literature had been too much injured by the Roman catholic church, to leave such a man at liberty to espouse its tenets without many limitations. Nor could he help feeling that, were it once again established on the same basis as that on which it had till lately stood, he would be obliged to pursue a very dif-

ferent course to that which he so boldly adopted under the rising spirit of protestant liberty.

But while feelings of this kind might exercise a considerable influence over this extraordinary man, he was still too closely united with the heads of the church, had spoken and written so strongly in its defence, that he could not but regard with more than ordinary concern the approach of an event which might overthrow its fundamental dogmas. There was, consequently, in the mind of Erasmus, at this juncture of affairs, a blending of very different sentiments ; and both catholics and protestants were able to cite him as an authority in favour of their respective views. The vehicle which he employed to convey his opinions on the subject of the council, was a commentary on the eighty-fourth Psalm.* Many passages occur in this exposition which would merit attention at any period ; but they were especially applicable to the wants of men when there was a danger that many might lose, in the turbulence of controversy, not only Christian charity, but every other essential of an evangelical profession. The moderate party, on both sides, looked with approbation on every attempt to soften the asperity of their too violent associates ; and Erasmus only needed a somewhat more affectionate earnestness of disposition to have become the recognised head and chief of a vast body of serious, but temperate, advocates of reform. He touches, in the commentary to which we have alluded, on one of the most important points of the great controversy ; but evidently as one who rather wished to modify than defend the disputed doctrine of free will. He says, that the question is more knotty than profitable ; and that, if it were discussed, it should be confined within the rules and principles of theological debate. “ It is enough,” continues he, “ if we acknowledge that man can do nothing by his own strength, and that if he possess any power, he owes it all to grace, by the influence of which we are what we are, whereby we

* Opera Eras.

plainly confess our own weakness, and glorify the mercy of the Lord. Let us acknowledge, that much is to be ascribed to faith ; only let us allow, at the same time, that this very faith is the peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit, and that it is not, as the world supposes, present to every one who says, ‘ I believe that Christ suffered for me.’ Let us concede that justification is by faith ; that is, that the hearts of believers are purified : only let us also allow that works of charity are necessary to the securing of salvation ; for a true faith cannot be inactive, seeing that it is the fountain and root of all good works. But let us rather distinguish the justice which cleanses the recesses of our minds, and which is rightly called innocence, and the justice which adorns and enriches it with good works. God, properly speaking, can be a debtor to no one, unless by his own free and gratuitous promise ; and if we fulfil the conditions of the promise, the power by which we do so is the effect of his munificence. Yet ought not the words reward or merit to be altogether disused, seeing that God is pleased to accept and value that which he works in us by his grace. It is not the word, but the thing, at which we ought to look. Nor let the ears of the uninstructed multitude be filled with such paradoxes as these : ‘ It matters not what your works are, only have faith, and you shall be saved ;’ or, ‘ Man, whatsoever he does, does nothing else but sin ;’ which, however true in one sense, are likely to be interpreted by the people in that which is most false and dangerous.” *

It was evident to the followers of Luther, that allusions were made in these expressions to the known and most important doctrines of that great man’s theological system ; but the cautions thus given respecting the

* If it should be allowed that too little care has been taken by writers on the article of justification by faith to guard it from antinomian error, it can also be proved, and with far greater force, that fearful carelessness has prevailed in stating the necessity of good works, for it must either be intended to set aside the merits of Christ, or the writer must be grossly negligent whenever such a subject is left loosely explained.

strong language sometimes employed in their illustration affected not the decided admissions which were made in reference to their agreement with the Gospel, and the immediate dependence of a true confession on the acknowledgment that divine grace is the sole foundation of human hope.

The opinions involved in the defences set up for the invocation of saints, presented greater difficulties to one who wished, like Erasmus, to soften and excuse that which one party regarded as an abomination, without seeming to the other to speak of it in terms of disrespect. We may observe the same of his remarks on the sacrifice of the mass, solitary masses, and the adoration of the elements; in treating of which he seems to encounter difficulties, the attempted explication of which leaves his acute intellect entangled in perplexities from which there is no escape. Thus, after defending the real presence, and the consequent propriety of worshipping the host, he says, notwithstanding, "No one is so foolish as to honour the human nature of Christ for the divine; or bread and wine for Christ." In another passage he remarks, "If we believe that the divine nature was not separated from the human in the sepulchre, is it not much more credible that it is not separated from the living body in the sacrament? Therefore, if we agree in this, the other points, such as how the body and blood of the Lord are present under the substance of the bread, or the species of bread and wine, and what accidents pertain to the body, and other things of the same kind, may be left to the determination of the synod." In concluding his argument, he thus oratorically speaks of the advantages to be looked for from the settlement of the dispute. "What," says he, "could be a greater blessing than to find ourselves once more assembled together in peace and harmony in the house of God? It is for this that the emperor strives; for this that Ferdinand, king of the Romans, of Hungary, and Bohemia, a prince of singular piety, employs his best exertions.

Nor does the most Christian king of the French fail to prove by his conduct his right to this praise : nor will the king of England forget his praise of defender of the Catholic faith. They, moreover, who best know the dispositions of pope Clement, assure us that, by his equitable arrangements, the peace of the church may be looked for as secure. Nor will the just views and influence of the learned cardinals be wanting to the furtherance of this great object. The design, in short, will prosper happily for Christ, if the other princes and states direct their minds to the same end. Strife has already prevailed too long. Wearied, let us seek for peace. If the merciful goodness of the Lord has been abused, and we have fallen into licentiousness, instead of exercising penitence, we should now tremble lest his fury burst upon us, as it did aforetime against the Jews. We speak not of abusing the clemency of princes : they know their power ; but they are willing to try what milder remedies may effect before they proceed to severer operations. It is thought, perhaps, that Cæsar slumbers ; but he is evidently awake in this matter : he is cautious, as a prince of the highest authority should be, in carrying on affairs ; but assuredly will he put in execution whatsoever he has once determined to effect. The goodness and philosophical mind of Ferdinand, whose character is that which Plato describes as becoming a prince, certainly merits not contempt, but more abundant reverence and a more religious obedience. Cyclopean feuds and mad temerity never produced any useful results."

The sentiments of Erasmus were considered in a very different spirit by the reformers, who regarded the pope as an inflexible enemy to the views they had adopted. In their eyes he appeared as an advocate of the maxim, that there could be no salvation beyond the pale of the church ; and the desire to refute this principle, as applied to those who saw so much reason to separate from that of Rome, speedily led to the adop-

tion of the counter-maxim, that no union whatever ought to be formed with the pope.

Whatever there was of good or evil in the spirit of the two parties, it was now that the circumstances of the times brought it especially into action. Bigotry, intolerance, the passion for power, the fear of change, on the one side ; the love of novelty, the hope of successful aggression, the enthusiasm and fanaticism which attend the establishment of a new state of things, on the other ;—these were the marks which distinguished that portion of each party which had not the glory of God, and the salvation of men's souls, for their object, but the introduction or firmer establishment of the system which seemed to promise the greatest prospect of political aggrandisement.

For the honour of religion and humanity, we may safely say, that these formed, on either side, but a small proportion of the great mass of religious professors, properly so called. But, in every season of political or religious excitement, it is those who feel that they have something to gain or lose, who seem most resolved on taking the lead of affairs. They speak a language understood by the world ; they know, from the examination of their own hearts, what is most likely to affect and interest the multitude ; and daring, as they do, to mingle the ordinary appeals to human passion with somewhat of a higher and nobler character, we need not wonder when we see them carrying their object in spite of the more sober-minded and spiritual advocate of holiness. The world comprehends to a very small extent the nature of the motives by which he is influenced ; and if they give him credit for sincerity, they speak at the same time as if he deserved pity for the blindness of his enthusiasm.

Among those who pursued with unabated rigour the persecuting spirit of the church, at its first onset against the reformers, duke George of Saxony still appeared conspicuous. His conduct towards the people under his government who manifested any inclination to

Lutheranism was marked by the fiercest intolerance ; and they appear to have borne his oppressive acts with a moderation and patience as honourable to their character as Christians, as his unjust procedure was derogatory from his dignity as a prince. Luther observed the distress of the reformers at Leipzig with feelings of warm commiseration. Their sufferings were in the cause of God and the Gospel ; and the persevering tyranny of the prince exhibited on a small scale that which had been perpetrated in the world at large by the rulers of the Roman church. Yielding to the full tide of his indignation, he assailed this great enemy of religious freedom and reform with a boldness corresponding to the ardour of his feelings. Unfortunately, he indulged himself in the use of language which had more of fierceness in its sound than of force in its application ; and while such a mode of expression could add no strength to the cause for which it was employed, it scarcely ever failed to provoke, on the opposite side, a more determined spirit of hostility.

Luther, was not less exposed than other men of his class and character to those quick alternations of feeling which usually accompany great ardour of temper. His conduct, indeed, on more than one occasion, seems to afford proof that he was peculiarly subject to such sudden changes in his views of others. The language which he employed in addressing the Roman pontiff savoured at one time of adulation ; at another, it breathed a spirit from which the most powerful bigot might have shrunk abashed and terrified. Almost the same may be said of his conduct towards the king of England and duke George of Saxony. He appeared, as friend or foe, to be always ready to say that which belonged to the sentiments of either character, in their highest degree of good or ill ; and, in most instances, he passed at once from the extremes of the one to the extremes of the other.

The appeal which he had made in favour of the

reformers of Leipzig * was couched in terms which could not fail to excite the wrath of a prince like George of Saxony, and which, indeed, any susceptible mind, not endowed with firmness equal to its susceptibility, must have regarded as not less injurious than unjust. Luther, when he called him the child or minister of the devil, ought surely to have inquired of himself whether the only reasons which he had for doing so were founded on the prince's zeal in the cause of his religion, or on motives which had their origin in a sensual and selfish heart. If a regard to truth obliged him to reason on the former supposition, rather than on the latter, the anger which he felt at the persecuting spirit of the prince should of itself have taught him how easy it was for a man of ardent zeal, and possessed of power, to overstep, in such a controversy, the limits of Christian charity. He allowed that, in his temporal capacity, he deserved the character which the world in general gave him; but before God, he said, he was not less execrable than Pontius Pilate, Herod, or even Judas himself. And Luther was right, if the prince did, as he asserted, defend error, knowing it to be such, against truth, suppressing the latter from any of those political motives which entered so largely into the calculations of the rulers of that age.

To the accusations of Luther, Cochlaus replied, as the champion of the prince, with a vehemence equal to that of the great reformer. He declared that the oath which was stated to have been taken against the protestants, by order of duke George, had not its origin with the prince, and that it was moulded by Luther to

* Sämtliche Schriften. The enemies of Luther might perhaps say that he was under the evil influence at this time to which other parts of his conduct have been attributed. It was in this year that he made known his conference with the power of darkness, the circumstances of which are described with great particularity. "It was not the first time," remarks Fleury, "that Luther was instructed by the devil; and in these different conferences he doubtlessly learnt from him, among other things, the condemnation of the mass. It is thus that God, for the confusion, or rather for the conversion, of the enemies of the church, permitted that Luther should be blinded, and led to confess that he had been enlightened and converted by the devil, and that the father of lies had been his master in one of the principal points of his reformation." — *Fleury*, l. cxxxiv. n. 111.

suit his own argument. The conduct of the reformer in breaking his monastic vows, and the whole system of his teaching, are also glanced at ; but sufficient is said to prove that Luther was not wrong in espousing the cause of the protestants of Leipzig as a persecuted people, and that the rules and manners of the church were regarded by the supporters of Roman catholic discipline as justifying the tyranny under which they groaned. Seventy persons, it appears, were actually driven into exile because they refused to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper unless permitted to do so in both kinds, and according to the simple rules for which there is evangelical authority. Luther, in his reply, distinctly states that their peaceful resignation to the decree of the duke was the consequence of his express advice, and that he was so far from exciting a spirit of revolt, as asserted by the duke, that he had inculcated, with the utmost earnestness, passive obedience to the laws as a necessary accompaniment to firmness of faith and holiness. In respect to the guilt with which he was charged in throwing off his monastic obligations, he speaks in a tone of deeply settled conviction. He had kept those vows inviolate, he says, so long as he owned their authority ; and when he ceased to acknowledge the foundation on which they rested, it was because it existed not either in natural or revealed truth. " Lamentable is the fact," he continues, " that human inventions have been every thing, and the word of God nothing ; whereas the latter deserves the most profound and devoted attention. I have given myself to the study of theology, with prayers and watchings, for twenty years ; for twelve years I have taught the Scriptures by reading and writing, with incredible labour, and in the midst of daily afflictions and persecutions ; yet do I feel myself to be still nothing but a tyro, employed even now only in the rudiments."

It was at the close of this year that he published the treatise " On Private Masses, and the Consecration of Priests : " one of the most important of his produc-

tions, as conveying his sentiments on these subjects, after a long examination of every argument that the Roman catholic church seemed able to bring in support of its practices. His joy and satisfaction at the reformation which had been effected in the administration of the communion in Saxony are nobly expressed. "God be praised," says he, "that I have lived long enough to see with my eyes the mass performed in purity and simplicity, and the right and legitimate use of that most holy sacrament properly established. I see this with great joy of heart, and the more especially since I myself, alas! assisted so many years, under papal corruption, to forward the abuse. It is with horror I recollect how I and others celebrated private masses at that time; but we did it in ignorance, and, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ has in his mercy forgiven us, seeing, moreover, that we have never done it since." On the subject of the papacy, he says, "We acknowledge not the papacy as the church, or even as a part of it; but account it a corruption and a desolation, and antichrist, which resists the church, the word, and the order of God, and sets itself above them, as the God of gods, according to the prophecy of Daniel and Paul. But since we cannot be separated bodily or locally from that corruption, or from that antichrist, — for, as Christ teaches, it will, to the end of time, occupy a seat, not without, but within the church, — let us be separated therefrom in a true sense, spiritually; let us avoid its corruptions, that we may stand steadfast in the faith, and cast off its defilements."

It was the object of Luther in these observations to prepare the minds of his countrymen for the assertion of a right on which, he saw, must depend the very being of a reformed church. If the pope was the sole depositary of the sacerdotal unction, no means existed for supplying it with ministers authorised to perform the peculiar functions of the priesthood. The pontiff would never, it was evident, consecrate men to ecclesiastical offices whose opinions tended to the uprooting

of almost every principle which supported his dignity. Luther and his associates were, therefore, constrained to adopt one or the other of these resolutions: that, namely, of leaving the completion of their work, the continuance of the reforms which they had introduced in both doctrine and discipline, in the preaching of the Gospel, and the rites of the altar, to those who might hereafter separate themselves from the Roman church, after having been ordained to its ministry; or that of calling labourers into the vineyard, on the authority of the church, considered according to the true catholic and spiritual meaning of the word.

In adopting the latter alternative, Luther was careful to show that he did not dispute the necessity of a proper call to the priesthood by the church. It was on the new views which he now took of the nature of the church and the administration of its authority that he had to defend his proceedings in the present necessity. "This," says he, "is the rock, and the fixed and solid foundation on which we stand. Wherever the Gospel is rightly and purely taught, there, of necessity, is the Christian church: for whosoever doubts this, doubts also the Gospel, and the Word of God. The Christian church exists where these are accounted of highest worth, namely, the Word of God, Christ, the Spirit, faith, prayer, baptism, the holy supper, the keys, the ministry; and where this is accounted as second in importance, the right, namely, of calling to the ministry those who may teach the Word of God, and dispense the sacraments. For what does Christ say, Matt. xviii. 19, 20.? 'Where two or three are gathered together,' &c.: and is it not plain that if two or three enjoy the privilege here described, it must exist in much greater force in the whole community? How clearly, again, does St. Paul speak concerning ordination, 2 Tim. ii. 2. 'The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Here there is no mention made of oil or ointment, but a command is

simply given to teach the Word of God. He to whom this is given is regarded by St. Paul as a pastor, a bishop, and a pontiff, for all are comprehended in the preaching of the Divine Word. This is the office which Christ accounted peculiarly his own ; for by the Word come the sacraments, and by the Word is the form of the sacrament constituted, which the papists do not deny. Christ certainly forgot the anointing when he said, ‘ Go teach all nations, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;’ that they might preach the Word of God, and administer the sacraments.”

The interest excited by every subject which bore any relation to the grand purposes of the reformation, kept Luther perpetually employed in refuting his opponents or strengthening the faith of his followers. He published, in the present year, several smaller treatises on the most popular points of the dispute. But it must always be remembered, to the honour of this wonderful man, that while engaged in controversy to a degree which distinguished him above every other polemical writer, he laboured with corresponding diligence as a preacher and a commentator on Scripture. At the close of the present year, he published the exposition, about which he had been for some time employed, on a part of the book of Psalms, and several sermons ; and it is with delight that every religious mind must contemplate the calm evangelical sentiments which are poured forth in some of these compositions, as the fruit of his most retired and holy contemplations.

Notwithstanding the opposition of duke George and the other chiefs of the papal party, the protestant cause continued rapidly to advance. This might, no doubt, be ascribed in some respect to the comparative security which the reformers enjoyed after the passing of the late decree ; but too much importance must not be ascribed to this circumstance. With the increase of light and knowledge, the minds of men would naturally become more interested in the topics which engaged the

attention of their most venerated instructors. Nor shall we be giving too much credit to Christians thus awakened to reflection, if we believe that a fair proportion of the number would at no time refuse to encounter some degree of danger in the assertion of a pure and saving faith. Among the most conspicuous of the new adherents to the reformation were the prince of Anhalt and the duke of Cleves, both of them distinguished for learning and piety, and well inclined to pursue with equal zeal and candour the main objects to be valued in the purifying of the church.

But while circumstances of this kind indicated the progress of truth and knowledge, the continued advances of fanaticism filled the protestants with alarm and sorrow, and afforded fresh opportunities for their enemies to confound the efforts which they made to obtain true Christian liberty with the wildest profligacy of thought and action that had ever veiled itself under a profession of religion. The anabaptists had lost none of their strength by the death of Muncer. His power depended wholly upon the flame which enthusiasm had lit up in his mind, and that was not of a kind to keep burning in the encounter of danger and privation. A party, situated like the people of whom he became the momentary head, derives more advantage from a quick succession of new leaders, full of vigour for the instant, than it suffers evil from the events which severally cut them off.

A powerful detachment of this party had obtained a settlement in Westphalia, and thence sent forth their inflammatory appeals against the continuance of any species of law or government, except such as might be established on the wildest interpretation of Scripture precept and prophecy. Thus they boldly asserted that the authority of magistrates was already abolished, and had given way to the reign of Christ, for the confirmation and execution of whose laws they had received a commission, they said, to employ the sword. Like heretics of a much earlier date, they denied that Jesus Christ

had derived his body from the Virgin Mary ; and, asserting their freedom from all moral as well as political restraint, defended polygamy as conformable to the system of grace, through which they looked for as much licentious enjoyment in this world as purer Christians expect of holy delight in the world to come.

CHAP. XIV.

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND. — CHARACTER OF HENRY VIII. —
 CARDINAL WOLSEY. — STATE OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND. —
 DESPOTISM OF THE CLERGY. — TINDAL. — BILNEY. — FRITH.
 — BAINHAM. — DECLINE OF WOLSEY'S POWER. — QUESTION
 RESPECTING THE KING'S DIVORCE. — EVENTS WHICH FOL-
 LOWED THEREUPON. — WOLSEY'S FALL. — CRANMER. — SIR
 THOMAS MORE. — THE KING'S SUPREMACY ESTABLISHED.

THE progress of events at the period of a great moral or religious revolution is like the flowing of an ocean, which spreads its arms wider and wider, and comes with a quicker pace, at each return of the tide. France, Italy, Spain, the strength and ornaments of southern, and nearly the whole of northern, Europe, had felt the shaking of the earth under the footsteps of the approaching giant. But no great nation had yet entirely thrown off its allegiance to the pope. The reformed states of Germany were linked by indissoluble ties to those which adhered with the utmost zeal to the Roman church; and in other countries the principles of protestantism had been embraced, not by the multitude, but by the few who were distinguished from their fellow-men by energy, power of inquiry, and a deep feeling of the vital importance of divine truth.

England had experienced, in common with other nations, the influence of the reformed doctrines. It was prepared to sympathise in the earliest efforts of Luther by the venerated memory of its own Wickliffe. From the period when that able teacher of the Gospel had spread open the pages of the Bible, and called his countrymen to study the Word of God for themselves, and compare its testimonies with the creeds of primitive Christianity, a spirit of inquiry existed in this country which indicated that, sooner or later, it would emancipate itself from the

tyranny of Rome. Persecution did its utmost to smother this rising spirit of religious freedom ; and many were the martyrs who bled for the profession of the truth which they had learnt in the study of Scripture.

Neither civil nor religious liberty enjoyed any prospect of success when Henry VIII. ascended the throne of his ancestors. His love of power was not more unfavourable to the improvement of his people, than his fondness for dogmatism and the learning of the schools. He was thereby led to invade the provinces of thought and knowledge, and place under royal law the dominion of truth. Had he been able to establish this supremacy, there would no longer have existed any of those happy retreats in which the scholar and philosopher rejoice to find themselves alone, and where their own authority is felt and acknowledged to be the highest. The example of Erasmus proves how open the most learned are to the influence of kingly power ; and that it is never exercised with more injury to the cause of sound erudition and pure religion than when the monarch himself has notions of his own to support, and seems to consider his credit and honour at stake in securing attention to his arguments.

The vices of this prince may in some degree be ascribed to the circumstances under which he began to reign. His father had been despised for his avarice ; and the oppressive exactions by which he had ruined the people, in order to gratify this base and unkingly passion, rendered his death a cause of national rejoicing. The new monarch sought popularity by the indulgence of a profligate extravagance, which the country was at first led to admire as a display of princely generosity. It soon discovered its error ; the exactions to which it became subject could ill be borne ; and it would probably have sought to lighten the burden by a strong display of indignation, had it not been kept down, first, by the watchfulness of the government, and next by the feeling of loyalty with which the prejudices originally

inspired in Henry's favour continued to animate a large portion of the people.

Religion could look for no help from the state at this period. The knowledge which existed was contraband in the eyes of the men in power: it had been derived from a more than suspected source; and the readiness with which the admirers of Wickliffe's writings acknowledged their reverence for those of Luther and Melancthon increased the abhorrence in which the name of the earlier reformer was held by the English Romanists. Henry's controversy with Luther contributed to destroy even the faintest hope which might have been entertained of his becoming a friend to the reformation. He was thereby rendered personally inimical to the cause; and there is nothing in the character of this monarch which could lead to the supposition that he would ever have sacrificed a personal feeling to any higher and nobler principle of action. It was to the existence of a stronger motive on the side of selfishness, encountering that which had its origin in pride and ancient prejudice, that the church of the reformation was indebted for his assistance.

Henry's political power was equal to that of the greatest of European monarchs; and he readily took a part in all the important movements of the age. At one time he was the close ally of the emperor; at another, of his rival, the king of France, and the pope. The position and resources of the nation enabled him to engage in wars, which produced the most fearful convulsions on the Continent, with comparative safety. This procured him renown and influence. His opinion was of weight in all affairs of importance; and the respect produced by power, riches, and external splendour, being easily made to stand good for the sentiments of their possessor, Henry enjoyed an authority which rendered him, in every way, a favourite ally of Rome.

The minister of the monarch, in the most brilliant portion of his reign, was the celebrated cardinal Wolsey: a man of extraordinary sagacity, and whose fidelity to

his master was not less conspicuous than his political wisdom. To his counsels and prudence Henry owed the preservation of a power which, under the control of his own wilful passions, would have speedily vanished in the contempt engendered by his personal weaknesses and vices. But Wolsey's wisdom and loyalty were mixed up with an ambition which gave additional vigour to every measure of his government in favour of Romish ascendancy. His love of power and display, his proudest imaginations as a prince of the church, his desire of fame and honour as a statesman, were as far satisfied as they could be in any station below that of the pontificate. He was, virtually, the ruler of a mighty kingdom, for every measure by which its affairs were managed emanated from him.* His riches were sufficient for the support of an establishment which was regarded with surprise, even in an age remarkable for its love of pomp. The splendour of a court had never been better adapted to produce an impression of awe than the grandeur with which this cardinal premier arranged his household. But if he filled the minds of his countrymen with wonder at the display of his wealth, he produced an equally strong impression on those of foreign princes by the surpassing skill with which he executed every project of diplomacy. It was well known in all the continental courts, that if he could be swayed, the king himself was secured: and hence the emperor, and other princes, found themselves constrained to conciliate his favour by promises, the breach of which involved first the sacrifice of their own honour, but eventually the degradation of Wolsey.

Henry's zeal for the support of the pope's authority

* According to Erasmus, "he was the bringer about of a peace between the chief monarchs of the world, when even pope Leo X. could only bring to pass a five years' truce. He had proceeded a fair way by his endeavours to render Great Britain *ex ære auream*, a more glorious nation than ever it was before. He purged the land of robbers, quieted disputes among great men, reclaimed the clergy, and restored learning. As for polite learning, as yet struggling with the patrons of the antient ignorance, he upheld it by his favour, and defended it by his authority, and adorned by his splendour, and cherished by his kindness." — *Strype*, vol. i. part i. p. 192.

against the attack of Luther was greatly increased by the contempt with which the reformer treated his attempts as a theologian. But it is singular how a prince of his character could continue to promote a system which, of all others, tended most to the abridgment of royal authority. The clergy claimed, at the hands of the pope, complete immunity from civil charges and punishments. To the pope were appeals made, the spirit of which was hostile to every kind of good government; and, by the management of Wolsey, the only defence which remained for the king's jurisdiction, in ecclesiastical affairs, was effectually destroyed. Till the time of that subtle politician's acquirement of supreme power, the English bishops had been obliged to acknowledge their dependence on the state for the enjoyment of those rich temporalities which were, doubtless, regarded by many as the most valuable part of their dignity. Wolsey, by uniting in himself the legatine authority with that of the chancellor, obtained a triumph over the crown which it would have been vain for the pope to demand in his own person. According to the views formerly held on the nature and proper government of the church, it was highly expedient that the monarch of a country should be obliged to ask the sanction and blessing of its head, when he nominated persons to fill its most important offices. While this custom prevailed, it required only a moderate share of honesty, on the part of the pontiff, to preserve the church from the influx of needy and ambitious politicians. But it was easy to be seen, that when the pope obtained possession of the temporalities of a distant country, they were as likely to fall into the hands of unworthy men, as if the undivided control over ecclesiastical appointments remained with the most worldly-minded monarch. The court of the former was not less dangerous to virtue than that of the latter; and it made little difference whether the wealth of the church was employed to further the designs of an ambitious pontiff, or a bad king. According to the established custom in this country, the newly-appointed bishop,

having been approved by the pope, was endowed with the revenues of his see by an order from the court of chancery. Till this had been issued, he was, in reality, as poor as any of the primitive overseers of the Christian church, and was thus taught to feel that he had national as well as catholic and ecclesiastical duties. Wolsey's assumption of power led to the destruction of this feeling ; and had circumstances continued to favour his views, and enable his successors in office to pursue the same projects, the church in this country would have speedily lost every trace of independence, and, probably, of usefulness.

But, notwithstanding the error committed by Henry in these points, and the many inducements which existed to make him a devoted ally of the pope, the history of several proceedings in the former part of his reign clearly proves that he was not always blind, either to the danger which the laws incurred through the pride of the Roman prelates, or to the necessity under which he lay of resisting those pretensions to independence which they daily advanced. The case of Dr. Standish, a man of great learning and honesty, guardian of the mendicant friars, and chief of the king's spiritual council, afforded the monarch a fair opportunity of expressing his true feelings on a most important point of the controversy between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

The doctor, it seems, had ventured to uphold the principle, that churchmen might lawfully be summoned to trial for offences against the laws, in the same manner as members of the laity. One of the most zealous of the high-church party, the abbot of Winchelcomb, loudly exclaimed against this opinion ; and Standish was, in the end, exposed to a persecution which threatened the most grievous consequences. During the progress of the dispute, the murder of a merchant-tailor, named Hume, was laid to the charge of some persons in the establishment of the bishop of London ; and the endeavour to bring them to justice being thwarted by the interference of the prelate, a new cause for discontent arose. The

unfortunate man had been murdered, it was generally believed, because he was not only suspected of reading Wickliffe's Bible, but had ventured to resist some unjust demand on the part of a priest. So little effect, however, had either the decision of the coroner or the murmurs of the people in this case, that the corpse of Hume was burnt in Smithfield as that of a suicide and a heretic, who had deserved a worse death than that which he was accused of having inflicted on himself.

But a feeling had taken possession of the public, which the clergy were no longer able to subdue. The decision of the ecclesiastical judges was protested against as tyrannous and unjust; and in this declaration of opinion the people were joined by their representatives in parliament, and by the first lawyers in the kingdom. Henry found himself greatly embarrassed by this state of things. He plainly saw the danger into which the royal authority, and the stability of the laws, would be brought, unless the clergy were obliged to acknowledge themselves as his subjects, as well as the rest of the community.

In this perplexity, he called to his counsels Dr. Vesey, dean of the chapel-royal, and demanded of him a full and free statement of his conscientious opinions on the question at issue. The answer of this eminent churchman convinced the king still more that his own secret feelings on the subject were correct. He, therefore, summoned a meeting of the council without delay; and Dr. Standish having been called before the assembly, he was formally accused of holding opinions ruinous to the dignity and privileges of the church. Of the six articles named in the accusation, he acknowledged himself the ready supporter of two: these were, first, that the exemption of ecclesiastics was not founded on a divine right; and, secondly, that no positive ecclesiastical law binds any but those who receive it!*

On these points, both the accused and Dr. Vesey argued with equal boldness and ingenuity. But neither

* Burnet, vol. i. pt. i. b. i.

their arguments nor the opinions of the lawyers could prevent the convocation from persevering in its original motion. Wolsey, in the presence of the lords and commons, the judges, and privy council, assembled at Baynard's Castle, made a solemn declaration before the king to this effect; and concluded by expressing his hope, that his majesty, to avoid the censures of the church, would refer the matter to the decision of the sovereign pontiff and his council at the court of Rome.

The account of this affair is of the utmost importance, as illustrating the state of things previous to the reformation in England. Nothing could better prove the determination of Wolsey to pursue his own interest, and that of the Roman church, in opposition to those of the nation, than the expression which he let fall in the discourse above related. Henry was himself startled by the words which threatened him with the censures of the church, if he did not, in fact, give up his authority as he who bore the sword for the punishment of evil doers. His conduct, on this occasion, was such as becomes a monarch. "By the permission and ordinance of God," said he, "we are king of England; and the king of England, in times past, never had any superior, but God only. Therefore, know you well, that we will maintain the right of our crown and of our temporal jurisdiction, as well in this as in all other points, in as ample manner as any of our progenitors have done before our time. And as for your decrees we are well assured, that you of the spirituality go expressly against the words of divers of them, as hath been showed you by some of our council; and you interpret your decrees at your pleasure, but we will not agree to them more than our progenitors have done in former times."

If arguments were needed to prove the blessings consequent on the reformation, the very circumstance that this affair was hushed up would afford sufficient evidence to establish its worth in the eyes of every lover of justice and liberty. Notwithstanding the declared sentiments of the king, the decision of a jury, the opinion

of lawyers and judges, the influence of the bishops was found sufficient to screen their instruments against the force of the laws. Henry foresaw the tumult which would arise if he persisted in punishing the offenders as they deserved; and the attorney-general was, therefore, directed to allow the most conspicuous of the accused parties to depart in safety on the plea of not guilty.

The indignation with which the people contemplated these things was greatly increased by the recollection of the long series of cruelties perpetrated against the Lollards, and every reader of Scripture or the writings of Luther. Wolsey himself acknowledged the necessity of a reformation so far as regarded the state of discipline and the manners of the clergy; but he did nothing towards repressing their furious hostility to the diffusion of that knowledge, the want of which was the real source of most of the prevailing abuses. The people, therefore, had to fight the battle for themselves; and had they understood the points of the controversy which it properly belonged to them to consider, they would have formed a barrier to the corruptions of the clergy not easily to be overcome. But, as yet, they could only murmur. There was not sufficient intelligence in the community to enable it to trace the evil to its source: no sufficient concord to give strength or consistency to its purposes. The executions which took place from time to time produced a feeling of horror and disgust; but no means were taken to prevent the recurrence of such barbarities; and the bishops continued to violate every law of humanity and the Gospel with impunity.*

But the day approached when truth was to reassert its authority. Many of the writings of Luther were already almost as well known in this country as in Germany. Among the English reformers, moreover, were men whose learning and energy well qualified them to fight

* Strype's Eccles. Memoirs, vol. i. part i. ed 1822. chap. vii. p. 113. A full account is here given of the visitation carried on in the diocese of London, and of the persons brought before the bishop.

the same battle, and employ the same weapons as Luther. Of this number was William Tindal, a man venerable in the history of the reformation, as calling to memory the first legitimate attempts made since the time of Wickliffe to give the people solid and Scriptural instruction. After having become favourably known to many persons of eminence, he received a small grant of money to secure his maintenance, while he carried into effect his long-formed design of translating the New Testament from the original Greek. In order to obtain advantages which could not be so readily secured in this country, he proceeded to Germany, and there enjoyed, for a time, the inestimable benefit of conversing freely with those noble examples of learning and piety which it was his ambition to imitate. From Germany he travelled into the Netherlands, and took up his abode at Antwerp, where, in the year 1526, he completed and printed his translation. Copies of the book were immediately sent to England, and their speedy circulation through the country filled the bishops with new alarm. Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London, issued an order prohibiting any one from possessing a copy, on pain of excommunication and punishment for heresy. The translation itself was described as proceeding from the followers of Luther, and as abounding in errors and pernicious glosses.

But neither the threats of punishment nor the abuse lavished on the work could prevent the circulation of Tindal's Testament. The bishop of London, who enjoyed the enviable distinction of hating the cruelties, though he allowed the necessity, of persecution, had recourse to the expedient of secretly purchasing the copies which had not yet been sent over to England. But this attempt to stop the diffusion of Scriptural light also failed. The money procured by the sale of the original impression was employed in printing a more correct edition of the translation, and the English prelates received fresh information every day of its favourable reception among the people.

Thus was the struggle carried on between the little band of Scriptural teachers, and the numerous and all-powerful hierarchy which, but for the inborn sense of right and freedom which always belonged to our nationality, would have brought England to the same state to which Italy was reduced by the operation of a similar power. Already had blood flowed in copious streams; and more was still to be poured out, in the hope, as it would seem, that the flowing of the sanguinary torrent might at length carry the Bible back into its obscurest hiding-places.

Among the sufferers of those eventful times were men whose united learning and piety would have adorned any station in the church. Their names, and the narrative of their martyrdoms, are familiar to most English readers. Bilney and Frith had both of them obtained distinction at the universities. There was nothing in their characters that savoured of enthusiasm; and not one of their enemies could accuse them of aught but preaching from the Scriptures, and exhorting those who heard them, to test the truth of their doctrines by a reference to the same divine source of knowledge. The former of these venerable martyrs, humbled under a sense of sin, had long sought for comfort in the ceremonies and ordinances of the Romish church.* He sought it in vain; and that saddest of all feelings, the fear that the last resource of afflicted minds, penitence and devotion, would not avail him, filled him with despair. A passage in the New Testament, to the reading of which he was led by the fame of the translation of Erasmus, re-inspired him with hope. The further study of the Gospel confirmed the impression thus made; and in proportion as he became happier in his mind, through the bland influence of Scriptural meditation, he felt increasing gratitude to the source from whence he had derived this consolation.

* Fox's Acts and Monuments. Among the first of Bilney's converts was "Master Hugh Latimer; which Latimer, at that time, was cross-keeper at Cambridge, bringing it forth upon procession days."

Having resolved to employ what might be left him of life in preaching those truths from which he had himself derived so much advantage, he entered upon his course with the spirit of a sincere and zealous convert. But he was not yet prepared to endure the sufferings to which such a profession of faith exposed him. Summoned before the bishop of London on the charge of heresy, he consented to retract, and was acquitted after bearing a faggot at S. Paul's cross.*

If his state was miserable before he became acquainted with the saving doctrines of the Gospel, it was doubly so now. Scarcely had he left the scene of his humiliation, when he began to experience all the terrors of a soul which had denied its God, or treated the blood of Christ as an unholy thing. No longer able to turn for comfort to that Gospel which he had denied, shut out from communion with the good and holy men whose example had formerly animated him to the desire of becoming a confessor, he appeared to himself like a creature already wandering in the outer darkness, and to whom hope was lost for ever.

Such a state of feeling could not be borne long without driving the sufferer either to madness or atheism ; the latter being not unfrequently the result of despair, operating sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another. But Bilney obtained mercy. His error was the consequence neither of perverseness nor of hypocrisy. He fell, as St. Peter, not with the consent of the spirit, but through weakness of the flesh. When his melancholy, therefore, had arrived at its height, he was still allowed to recollect the invitations of the Gospel. He saw therein no denial of mercy to those who should diligently seek it by prayer and repentance. Awakened to new hope by these returns to Scripture, he began to meditate on the means by which he could best prove his contrition, and recover the peace which he had lost. His resolution was soon taken ; and, with the New

* In his retraction he submitted to call Luther a wicked and detestable heretic.

Testament in his hands, he hastened into Norfolk, where he preached the doctrines of the reformed faith so openly, and with such zeal, that he speedily attracted the notice of Nix, the bishop of Norwich, by whom he was apprehended, and condemned to the flames. His constancy and cheerfulness, when led to the stake, proved how much happier the human soul may feel in the sight of any species of worldly terror, than it can in the perfect possession of outward safety and tranquillity with any cause of inward disturbance. Such was the deep feeling of serenity which filled the heart of the martyr at this moment, that he saw the pile prepared for him with the complacency of one about to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving; and when exhorted to remain firm, he replied calmly, that he was like a mariner, who, when tossed upon a stormy sea, thinks only of arriving at a safe port, and when he reaches it rejoices that his danger and labours are at an end.*

The next victim was a layman, James Bainham by name, a lawyer in the Temple, and a person of family and worth. His apprehension was followed by his being immediately put to the rack, and in the agonizing dread with which he contemplated a repetition of the torture, he professed himself willing to recant. But, like Bilney, he soon found that no bodily pains could inflict a suffering so terrible to the human heart as the fear and anguish of conscience. Humiliated and deeply penitent, he resolved on giving the best proof in his power of the sorrow with which he regarded his weakness. Proceeding, with this purpose in his mind, to St. Austin's church in the city, he rose during the service, and before all the congregation, held up a copy of the English Testament, and declared, with a loud voice, that he there acknowledged the crime of which he had been guilty in recanting. He was led to this step, he said, by the torments which he had suffered already, and by the assurance which possessed his mind, that if

* Fox's Acts and Monuments.

he did not thus seek for mercy, the day of judgment would doom him to everlasting misery.

A brief interval only was allowed to elapse before he was brought to the stake. The same remarkable composure and cheerfulness of mind as distinguished Bilney in his last hours, characterised the conduct of Bainham. He rejoiced at the prospect of being admitted, notwithstanding his former weakness, to the company of those who had honoured God by their deaths ; and when the fire had already half consumed his body, he exclaimed, " Think not, O ye papists, that I am suffering any agony in these flames. Ye look for miracles, and behold a miracle ; for this burning pile is to me as a bed of roses."

Such was the constancy with which these professors of the evangelical faith bore testimony to its truth. Never did the world behold a more awful instance of the power which the spirit of darkness exercises among men, than that afforded by the condemnation of these protestant martyrs. When the persecutors of the early Christians condemned them to the scaffold, or the ensanguined circle of the amphitheatre, they only pursued a course which had been adopted for ages by the enemies of truth. They turned neither to the right hand nor the left in these proceedings ; contradicted no professed principle ; were guilty of no inconsistency, of no hypocrisy, of no intolerance even, for it was but an exercise of such power as had ever been employed to support the empire of falsehood and sensuality. The Gospel had overturned the foundations on which their system was built. It had taught men that the love of God is the source of all wisdom and all good, and put this solemn question to the whole human race, " If a man loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen ?" Nor had it left men at liberty to determine absolutely for each other that which is true or false, without an appeal to a higher standard than their own reason. That standard is the word of God ; and it was for their appealing to

this standard that the chiefs of the Roman church deluged its courts with the blood of martyrs.

While these events were in progress, the affairs of the court and kingdom afforded occasion for much anxiety on the side of the party in power. Wolsey had fallen from his high estate. He had long hoped that the influence which he exercised not only over the government of England, but in so many of the foreign courts, would at length procure his elevation to the papal throne. Promises even were given him to that effect by the emperor Charles; and when he found them broken, he boldly changed the course of his master's policy. But from this period his conduct was that of a disappointed man. He seems to have endeavoured to make up for his loss of the splendid prize on which he had set his heart, by exercising the power he possessed with a more reckless disregard of every thing but the gratification of his pride. Thus he did not scruple to place his own name above that of the king's; and by this, and a series of similar actions, Henry was at last convinced that the crown of England must be made to fit two heads, or be snatched from the grasp of such a favourite.

But the power of Wolsey was planted deep in the feelings and prejudices of the nation; and Henry had learnt to repose on his counsels till it was almost impossible for him to decide on any matter of importance without appealing to his experience. It would, therefore, have been long, it is probable, before the cardinal had found reason to suspect the stability of his position, had it not been for circumstances which brought the whole force of his sovereign's will and passions to bear against his interests.

We need do little more than allude to the transactions respecting Henry's divorce from Catherine of Arragon. They form a portion of the events which belong as much to national as to church history. It is sufficient for us to remind the reader that the king had at first objected to marrying his brother's widow, but was over-

ruled by the strong arguments advanced in favour of the measure by the political counsellors of his father.* The same dislike to the union existed after the marriage had taken place, and when Henry ascended the throne. But the arguments which had been originally advanced in its favour were still pressed upon his consideration ; and he was induced thereby to confirm the marriage, and exalt Catherine to the throne.

The fact that he had originally strong objections to his union with this princess, and that they were founded on scruples which had every appearance of conscientious feeling, ought not to be lost sight of. Although it cannot apologize for his subsequent conduct, it certainly softens, in some measure, the suspicion that his course was begun in hot-blooded sensuality. Considering his character and his early formed prejudice against Catharine, the respect which he paid her, and the constancy with which he appears to have kept his marriage-vows, till the question of the divorce was settled, we should be led to believe that he was free from treachery ; and that in pressing for the divorce more eagerly when he became enamoured of Ann Boleyn, he acted no otherwise than any man would have done, who had already come to the conclusion that religion, as well as his own inclination, was on the side of such a measure.

At the first attempt made to settle this important business, it was little suspected that the difficulties which it involved would finally defy the power of the church, and only slowly yield to the will and determination of the prince and his courtiers. But the Roman pontiff had felt the weight of the emperor's glaive, and he knew that to pronounce a sentence of divorce which should dethrone a near and respected relative of that sovereign

* The bull granted by the pope to authorise the marriage was couched in terms the most explicit, and ended with a solemn prohibition against any objection which might be hereafter urged against the union : — " Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostræ absolutionis, dispensationis, et voluntatis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attemptare præsumpserit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei ac Beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus se noverit incursurum."

would be to involve himself in troubles worse than those from which he had so narrowly escaped. Nor was it consistent with his station to forget, that by a proceeding of this nature he might endanger the church itself. Charles V., it had been already seen, was not a prince who valued the pretensions of the hierarchy when they interfered with his own determinations ; and there was every reason to suspect that any act, or combination of circumstances, which should bring the power of Rome into collision with his own, would determine his mind in favour of the protestants. Henry, on the other hand, was not to be offended with impunity. In him the church had found a defender who performed his office with the affection of a son, and the zeal of a partizan. His power and influence were necessary as counterbalancing weights to those of the emperor and the French king ; and it was reasonably apprehended that if they were thrown into the opposite scale, the church would suffer materially both in its independence and its resources.

To these considerations, it is but fair to believe, were added others of a higher kind. The question of the divorce was one which could not be considered without reference to Scripture, and to the fundamental principles of natural and moral law. That this reference was wholly neglected would be an unjust assertion ; and when once engaged in an inquiry of this nature, the minds of most men will find themselves in a labyrinth, from which, with any feeling of conscientiousness, it is impossible very quickly to escape.

But if the pope had cause to fear the consequences which might result from the discussion of this subject, cardinal Wolsey was placed thereby in a state of far greater perplexity. He had prided himself on the soundness of the policy which had hitherto preserved the dignity of his sovereign and the nation from foreign aggression. The impetuosity of Henry's feelings was now such as to threaten to undo, by some sudden determination, all that his wise, though ambitious,

minister had effected. Had Wolsey been nothing more than a political counsellor, he must have felt alarmed and irritated at this aspect of affairs. But his natural acuteness and penetration enabled him to foresee that on the issue of the question in debate hung all his fortunes, and that if it should be determined contrary to his known sentiments, he must lose, for ever, the sole support of his dignity and splendour, the trust and confidence of the king.

It was Wolsey's interest and duty to watch the progress of the discussion in the Roman court, and frame his own measures accordingly. Had he attempted to act independently of the rule thus afforded him, he would have been favouring a system, under the predominance of which his power and riches would have vanished like a shadow. Nor could he do so without a violation of the fidelity which he owed to the church, of which he was the favoured child, and to the principles of which he adhered, as founded on rightful precepts. Had he sought only to please the king in this matter, he would have merited not merely the censures which are heaped on pride and ambition, where only holiness should prevail, but the deep reprobation, the scorn and contempt, with which the time-serving courtier is deservedly overwhelmed.

Wolsey, in short, took the part which it might be expected, as well from his character as his necessities, he would adopt. After it had been attempted in vain, by the court of Rome, to determine the question, so as to set it at rest, by satisfying the wishes of the English monarch, Cardinal Campegio was sent over to this country with legantine powers and instructions to form with Wolsey a court to try the cause. Campegio was Wolsey's junior in the sacred college; and the latter, it is suspected, wished to have him for his colleague on this occasion, that he might still preserve his state, and exercise the influence which it was now so necessary he should possess for his own safety.*

* Fuller is very amusing in his account of this matter. "Campegius

A. D. 1529. Both the king and the queen were formally cited to appear before the legates and their court; and both June. obeyed the summons. The unfortunate Catherine addressed her consort in terms of sorrow and respect. Many powerful reasons were contained in the few words she uttered, to prove that the meditated divorce would be an outrage against justice, as well as mercy. "Alas, Sir! I see I am wronged, having no counsel to speak for me, but such as are your subjects, and cannot be indifferent upon my part. Therefore I must humbly beseech you, even in charity, to stay this course until I have advice and counsel from Spain; if not, your grace's pleasure be done," was the melancholy conclusion to her brief address, and having finished which she left the court, apparently resolved to resist oppression with a dignity which should have more of patience in its character than of petulance or anger.

The pope had flattered Henry with the notion that he had put a bull into the hands of Campegio which would enable him to determine the matter according to his wishes; and, though no efforts of Wolsey or the king could induce the pontiff to give permission for this bull to be seen by others, Henry still hoped that the consultation of the legates would end in the sentence of divorce being published and confirmed.

was the junior cardinal," says he, "and therefore the rather procured by Wolsey to be his colleague in this business, whose pride could scarce admit an equal, but abhorred a superior, that any foreign prince should take place of him in England. As Wolsey's junior, so was he none of the most mercurial amongst the conclave of cardinals, but a good *heavy man*, having *ingenium par negotio*; neither too much nor too little, but just wit enough for the purpose the pope employed him in. Wolsey might spur Campegius, and Campegius would bridle Wolsey, keeping them both strictly to the letter of their instructions. Wolsey, hearing Campegius was come to Calais, with an equipage not so court-like as he could have desired, and loth that his own pomp should be shamed by the other's poverty, caused him to stay there till he sent him more splendid accommodations, at least in outward show, and then over he came into England. But see the spight of it. As the cardinal's mules passed Cheapside, out of unruliness they chanced to break the trunks they carried, which were found full of nothing but emptiness, which exposed his mock state to the more scorn and contempt. Empty trunks, the lively emblem of this cardinal's legacy, coming hither with intent and instructions to do little, and going hence having done nothing at all." — Book v. p. 172. The real argument with the pope most probably was, that Campegius was known to favour, in some degree, the emperor's wishes, but was almost indifferent. — *Strype*, p. 145.

But he soon found reason to fear that his expectations had been formed without due consideration. The court was adjourned from day to day, and no progress whatever made in the trial. While he thus vainly pressed his cause, the queen was not inactive in her defence. She had appealed to her nephew for support, and Charles had intimated that he would not allow her to be oppressed without his resenting the injury she suffered. In this state of things, the pope was advised to allow of an avocation to Rome ; and no sooner did this become known to the king, than he directed his ambassadors to employ their most earnest persuasions to dissuade the pontiff from this proceeding. Wolsey was still so far in favour with the king as to be made his instrument in the endeavour to prevent the cause from being carried to Rome. We are informed, that he directed Dr. Bennet, in his name, and with tears in his eyes, "lying at the pope's feet, to assure him, that the king and kingdom of England were certainly lost, if the cause were avocated : therefore, he besought him to leave it still in their hands, and assured him, that for himself, he should rather be torn in pieces, joint by joint, than do any thing in that matter contrary to his conscience, or to justice." *

The process was delayed by continual intermissions of its sittings till the 23d of July. From the exertions which had been made in his favour, and the general bearing of the cardinal, Henry cherished the hope that the decision of this day would set the matter at rest, and leave him at liberty to contract a new marriage. But Campegio had determined otherwise ; and when the monarch and his courtiers were in full expectation of hearing the definitive sentence pronounced, they found, to their mortification, that the cardinal intended to insist on following the rules of the consistory at Rome, and ceasing from all further discussion of the matter during a vacation which was to last till the beginning of October.

* Burton, vol. i. p. i. b. ii.

Shortly after this, the pope sent orders to the legates to dissolve the commission, and inform the king of the avocation of the cause to Rome. Henry was now left in extreme perplexity. His determination to obtain the divorce became firmer as he continued to experience fresh annoyances from the prosecution of the suit. By an easy species of fraud, he was ready to attribute the whole burthen of his uneasiness on these occasions to the unfortunate queen; and if he had little personal enmity against her when the separation was first suggested to his thoughts, there is no reason to believe that such was the case after the affair had been some time in progress.

In the disgust which the monarch thus harboured in his breast Wolsey found a share. The difficulties of his present position had not yielded to the power and subtle wit which had hitherto borne him along the tide. Henry expected to find in him a minister sufficiently skilful and compliant to carry his point against all obstacles; and Wolsey manifested, at first, so strong an inclination to fulfil his master's wishes, that the queen regarded him as her chief enemy, and readily adopted the views of the emperor Charles as to the policy of abridging his influence. It only needed that Henry should be rendered suspicious of his zeal or affection to humble him beneath the power of his enemies on both sides; and the untoward determination of Campeggio, to close the court, with the subsequent order of the pope that the cause should be tried at Rome, quickly brought about that collision of feeling, which no art on the side of the cardinal could overcome.

The fate of this extraordinary man was now deter-

* "It is certain he was as earnest in this cause as ever he was in any, as appears by his importunity with the pope, begging and beseeching him, as he esteemed him a Christian, a good cardinal, worthy of that sacred college, no useless and unprofitable member of the apostolic see; as he looked upon him to be a lover of right and justice, his faithful creature, and, in a word, one that desired eternal salvation, that he would, at this time, have respect unto his counsel and intercession, and favourably grant the king his most godly requests; which, had he not known them to be right, holy, and just, he would rather, he said, have undergone all kinds of punishment than have promoted them; nay, that he would pawn his very life and soul for them." — *Strype, Eccles. Annals*, vol. i. part i. p. 135.

mined. Henry, at the approach of the Michaelmas term, required him to resign the great seal ; and almost immediately after he was impeached in the house of lords. On the articles of impeachment being brought before the commons, his faithful servant, Cromwell, supported his cause so well, that he was spared the personal disgrace which seemed to await him at their hands.

But though safe from punishment in his own person, the king deprived him not only of his temporal dignities, but of his rich ecclesiastical possessions. At once archbishop of York and bishop of Winchester, besides enjoying numerous minor, but almost equally profitable preferments, he now saw himself in danger of being reduced to penury. The principal offence laid to his charge was, that he had unlawfully exercised the legantine office, and introduced the pope's bulls into this country, contrary to the statute of Richard II. He might, therefore, consider himself happy in escaping with merely the loss of wealth ; but such was the attachment which still lingered in the heart of the king towards his ancient servant, that he left him only a short time to suffer even from causes of this kind. The bishoprics, and the splendid furniture which had been seized in his residence, were restored ; and had he now manifested any of the self-respect and dignity which ought to have been looked for in such a man, he might still have enjoyed much of the influence and honour which attend true greatness even in its fall.

Unhappily for Wolsey, he had never contemplated a reverse of fortune. His elevation as a churchman had made him forget himself as the favourite of a king, and subject consequently to all the changes and chances of a courtier's life. When calamity approached, therefore, it found him wholly unprepared to meet the storm. He sunk overwhelmed with despair ; and his enemies had the satisfaction of seeing him, not only humbled in his fortunes, but broken in that heart and spirit of pride, before which they had so often trembled. Henry pitied him, but peremptorily ordered his de-

parture from London ; and, after a vain attempt to remain in the neighbourhood of the capital, he was obliged to yield to the influence of those now in power, and take his journey into Yorkshire.

A cardinal and an archbishop, with sufficient wealth remaining to support both dignities, it was scarcely to be expected that he would proceed with the feelings of an exile to his extensive diocese. But the loss of a single step to the ambitious man is the loss of confidence and hope. It was at the price of years, and of toil the most afflicting, that he gained it, and, once lost, the re-ascent seemed contemplated in vain.

It was not, however, allowed the unfortunate Wolsey to try what retirement and study might do in calming his irritated mind. He had been in Yorkshire only a few months, when he was accused of high treason by the earl of Northumberland, and committed as a prisoner to the keeper of the Tower, who had directions to convey him to London. This blow was sufficient to destroy all lingering remains of hope. From the moment he became a prisoner, though treated with the respect due to his rank, he resigned himself to despair. His strength was not sufficient to enable him to sustain this agitation of mind, and by the time he reached Sheffield Park, the seat of the earl of Shrewsbury, he was evidently approaching his latter end. A brief revival of nature enabled him to resume the journey, and he reached Leicester ; there he again sunk under the burthen of his grief, and with his last breath taught a melancholy lesson of penitence and humility to those who serve man and themselves with more fidelity than God.*

During the progress of those affairs which eventually ruined the fortunes of Wolsey, two men of distinguished worth and ability were gradually rising to power and fame. These were sir Thomas More and Cranmer. So broadly marked with inconsistencies were the characters of men at this period, that the former of

* Cavendish, Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biog.* vol. i. p. 540.

these celebrated actors in the events of the reformation, was not more remarkable for his private worth, the extent of his learning, the force of his natural ability and general purity of public conduct, than for fierceness of zeal and cruelty as a persecutor, when called upon to aid the designs of the Romish priesthood. To sir Thomas More was committed the charge of completing the prosecution of Frith, Bainham, and others, and it was this otherwise amiable man, and upright judge, who condemned them to the flames. At the time of Wolsey's disgrace, he was in the plenitude of his fame, and the chancellorship having been offered to Wareham, archbishop of Canterbury, and being refused by that prelate, owing to his great age, he was admitted to this eminent station, a station as fitted to display his errors as his virtues, but in which he manifested an integrity of purpose so unstained by the usual marks of a willing or selfish prejudice, that the former ask our pity, while the latter demand our veneration.

Cranmer was indebted for the favour which he enjoyed at the hands of Henry to the power which learning, simplicity, and good sense united, will always give a man when the powerful stand more in need of counsel than flattery. This eminent reformer had acquired distinction at Cambridge for his extensive erudition, and profound knowledge of divinity. Wolsey was so well acquainted with his character, that he wished to make him one of the professors in his own newly established college; but Cranmer refused the proffered honour, from an indifference, say his biographers, to the calls of ambition, but more probably, we think, from an instinctive dread of sacrificing his knowledge, his love of truth and ingenuousness, to the support of that system of the falsehood of which he began already to be convinced.

The appearance of the plague at the university had obliged Cranmer to leave his usual residence, and take up his abode in the house of a Mr. Cressy of Waltham Cross, to whose sons he had lately been appointed tutor. In the course of his progress, the king stopped at

Waltham for the night ; and Gardiner and Fox having a lodging assigned them at Mr. Cressy's, they there became acquainted with Cranmer. The learning and ingenuity manifest in his conversation inspired them with the highest respect for his ability ; and when the discourse at supper was directed to the subject of the divorce, they listened to his observations as those of a man whose intellect was as clear as it was powerful. Cranmer had long since formed his opinion on the nature of the question ; and he now remarked, that the proper method of settling the dispute would be to refer it to the universities, and the most celebrated scholars of various countries : that if they determined the marriage to have been unlawful in itself, the decree of the pope must have left it so still ; and that, therefore, nothing farther was required than their decision to relieve the king from the embarrassment which he had so long suffered by the delays of the Roman court. Henry, on being informed of this suggestion, expressed his desire to see the author of so acceptable a proposition ; and Cranmer, being called to court, speedily secured the king's favour, and, what was so far more difficult to be acquired or retained, his deep and sincere respect.

Cranmer having been recommended to the father of Anne Boleyn, newly created earl of Wiltshire and Ormond, was received into his household, that he might enjoy sufficient leisure to compose a treatise elucidating and confirming his views respecting the divorce. Several learned men, in the mean time, were directed to proceed to Germany, France, and Italy, for the purpose of consulting the most celebrated of their cotemporaries ; and Henry appears to have been suddenly inspired with a new hope of seeing his wishes fulfilled.

It was intrusted to Gardiner and Fox to manage this important business in the university of Cambridge ; and the letter in which they acquainted the king with their proceedings affords some curious information respecting the manner in which they were carried on. " Pleaseth your highness," say they, " to be advertised, that ar-

living here at Cambridge upon Saturday last past, at noon, that same night, and Sunday in the morning, we devised with the vice-chancellor, and such other as favour your grace's cause, how and in what sort to compass and attain your grace's purpose and intent; wherein, we assure your grace, we found much towardness, goodwill, and vigilance, in the vice-chancellor and Dr. Edmunds, being as studious to serve your grace as we could wish or desire. Nevertheless there was not so much care, labour, study, and diligence employed on our party, by them, ourself, and other, for attaining your grace's purpose, but there was as much done by others for the let and impeachment of the same; and as we assembled they assembled; as we made friends they made friends, to let that nothing should pass us in the university's name: wherein the first day they were superior, for they had put in the ears of them, by whose voices such things do pass, *multas fabulas*, too tedious to write unto your grace. Upon Sunday at afternoon were assembled, after the manner of the university, all the doctors, bachelors of divinity, and masters of arts, being in number almost 200. In that congregation we delivered your grace's letters, which were read openly by the vice-chancellor. And for answer to be made unto them, first, the vice-chancellor, calling apart the doctors, asked their advice and opinion; whereunto they answered, severally, as their affections led them, *et reserat in multa confusione*. Tandem they were content that answer should be made to the questions by indifferent men; but then they came to exceptions against the abbot of St. Benet's, who seemed to come for that purpose; and likewise against Dr. Reppes and Dr. Crome; and also generally against all such as had allowed Dr. Cranmer's book, inasmuch as they had already declared their opinion. We said thereunto, that by that reason they might except against all; for it was likely, that in a question so notable as this is, every man learned hath said to his friend as he thinketh on it for the time: but we ought not to judge of any man, that he setteth more to defend

that which he hath once said, than truth afterward known. Finally, the vice-chancellor, because the day was much spent in those altercations, commending every man to resort to his seat apart, as the manner is in those assemblies, willed every man's mind to be known secretly, whether they would be content with such an order as he had conceived for answer to be made by the university to your grace's letters ; whereunto that night they would in nowise agree. And forasmuch as it was then dark night, the vice-chancellor continued the congregation till the next day at one of the clock, at which time the vice-chancellor proposed a grace after the form herein inclosed, and it was first denied ; when it was asked again, it was even on both parties, to be denied or granted ; and at the last, by labour of friends to cause some to depart the house which were against it, it was obtained in such form as the schedule herein inclosed purporteth, wherein be two points which we would have left out ; but, considering by putting in of them we allowed many, and that, indeed, they shall not hurt the determination for your grace's part, we were finally content therewith."

The points which the writers of this epistle would have fain left out in the decree of the university, were these :—that the question should be disputed in public, and decided by the majority of votes. It cannot but be evident, indeed, that fears were entertained respecting the submissiveness of the university to the will of the monarch. And in this an honest mind would rejoice, were it not that, with all its opposition, it was open to the practice of arts which soon enabled the king to obtain a decision according to his wishes.*

While Fox and Gardiner were furthering the royal cause at Cambridge, Dr. Crook was exerting himself with equal zeal on the continent ; and his letter to Henry, dated Venice, July 1. 1530, gives indisputable evidence respecting the opinions of the reformers in general on the subject of the divorce. " Please it your

* Strype. Burnet.

highness to be advertised," says he, " that as this day I obtained the common seal of the university of Padua, in substantial and good form ; for all the doctors were assembled upon Sunday, and the case was amongst them solemnly and earnestly disputed all Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and this present Friday in the morning again ; and thereupon they concluded with your highness, and desired a notary to set his sign and hand unto an instrument, by Leonicus and Simonetus advised, in corroboration of your cause, and thereby to testify that this instrument was their deed, device, act, and conclusion : and, for the more credence to be given to the said instrument, they caused the chancellor of the potestate here to set his hand and seal for the approbation of the authority of the notary : a copy of all the which things I send unto your highness by this bearer, in most humble wise beseeching the same to be advertised, that the general of the black friars hath given a commandment that no black friars dispute the pope's power : notwithstanding prior Omnibonus procureth daily new subscriptions, and will do till the brief of contrary commandment shall come into his hands. My fidelity bindeth me to advertise your highness, that all Lutherans be utterly against your highness in this cause, and have letted as much with their wretched power, malice, without reason or authority, as they could and might, as well here as in Padua and Ferrara, where be no small companies of them. I doubt not but all Christian universities, if they be well handled, will earnestly conclude with your highness. And to obtain their assent, as well through Italy, France, Almayne, Austrich, Hungary, and Scotland, I think it marvellous expedient for the preferment of this your most honourable and high cause. As from the seignory and dominion of Venice towards Rome, and beyond Rome, I think there can be no more done than is done already, albeit, gracious lord, if that I had in time been sufficiently furnished with money. Albeit I have, beside this seal, procured unto your highness an hundred and ten subscriptions, yet it had been

nothing in comparison of that that I might easily and would have done ; and at this hour I assure your highness, that I have neither provision nor money, and have borrowed an hundred crowns, the which also are spent about the getting of this seal ; of the which my need, and divers impediments in your highness's cause here, I have advertised your highness by many and sundry letters, and with the same sent divers books and writings ; part to Hierom Molins, a Venetian, and factor to Maphæus Bernardus, by the hand of your subject, Edmund Herwell ; part directed to Mr. Tuke, whereof I am nothing ascertained whether they be exhibited unto your highness or not, to no little discomfort unto me : notwithstanding I have reserved a copy of all things, letters and others, and herein inclosed a bill, specifying by whom, and to whom I directed my said letters, in most humble wise beseeching your most royal clemency, to ponder my true, sure, and good endeavours, and not to suffer me to be destitute of money, to my undoing, and utter loss of your most high causes here, for of myself I have nothing whereby to help myself." *

The conclusion to which the most celebrated universities of the age arrived, fulfilled the expectations which the agents of the king had formed. Those of Paris, Bologna, Padua, Tholouse, were alike determined in their sentiments respecting the illegality of the marriage, and the want of proper authority on the part of the pope to remove this illegality by a dispensation. In some of the decrees the marriage was spoken of as horrid and detestable ; and as prohibited, under the heaviest penalties, as well by natural as divine law. At Oxford and Cambridge the decision was procured with greater difficulty than at the foreign universities. There the question could not be considered in the abstract, as it might be, in a great degree, among the scholars abroad. The suspicion that Lutheranism lurked under the veil of loyalty in this instance, alarmed the heads of the catholic party, far more sensible of their danger in

* Records. Burnet.

England than in France or Italy. Henry, moreover, by some late acts carried through parliament, had evinced a desire to suppress certain privileges of the clergy, which were regarded by the people as favouring corruption; and this, coupled with the circumstance of his appealing from the pope to the universities, tended to give the whole business the air of a party question between the high churchmen of the day, and those who began to own the necessity of some reform.

It was at length, however, decided, both at Oxford and Cambridge, that the marriage ought to be considered as illegal, and therefore null. This testimony in favour of the king, though not accorded with the readiness which might have been acceptable to a monarch of his irritable nature, was of the utmost importance to the furthering of his cause. By the advice of some of his friends, he had sent agents into Switzerland; and, with the exception of Bucer, all the great reformers of that country were in favour of the divorce. *Æcolampadius* and *Zuingli* himself entered into the dispute with ready zeal. With them was associated the celebrated German divine, *Osiander*, whom the arguments of *Cranmer*, now in that country, had convinced of the justness of the king's determination. *Calvin* followed in the same train; but it does not appear that either *Melancthon*, or any other of the Lutheran leaders, could be persuaded into declaring the marriage unlawful. The Levitical code, they said, was not binding on Christians; and, therefore, no objection drawn therefrom ought to be taken as justifying the divorce. It is a curious fact, that, in the midst of these disputes between the learned divines of the Christian church, the Jewish doctors were called upon for an interpretation of the law as stated in the divine records of their nation. According to them, the commandment regarding marrying a brother's wife, when he died without children, was of force only while the Israelites remained in the land of Judæa, and during the continuance of a state of things in which it was necessary that the succession of families to certain por-

tions of land should be carefully preserved. At a later period, and under other circumstances, this rule lost its force ; while the law against marrying a brother's wife could be altered neither by time, nor any change of circumstances.

The pope and the emperor observed these proceedings with little complacency. An application was made to the former, on the part of the king's agents, for authority to receive the opinions of divines and casuists, and after some time it was reluctantly granted. No surprise, perhaps, ought to have been entertained at the unwillingness of the pope to concede such a point. The terms of the dispute implied a doubt of his authority on matters about which, in the more flourishing times of the papacy, no question could have been safely entertained. Nor was it to be supposed that the emperor would patiently listen to any proposal which tended to set aside his so frequently declared resolution of defending the cause of his near relative. It was, consequently, against the influence and authority of both these potentates, that the agents of Henry had to strive ; and no better proof, perhaps, could be given of the rapid change which was every where taking place in the minds of men, and in their feelings respecting the right of private judgment, than their success in this proceeding. Numerous scholars and divines, in every country of Europe, openly declared opinions in direct opposition to the known wishes of those whose power had till lately been the arbitrator in such disputes. The question was examined, not by the light of pontifical decrees, but by that of Scripture and philosophy ; and the decision came forth supported, not by the infallible judgment of the pope, but as the result of a free inquiry carried on in the halls of learned universities.

Things being in this state, it was considered in England that steps might now safely be taken for bringing the affair to an issue. In order to effect this object, the king obtained the signatures of the cardinal, of the archbishop of Canterbury, of four bishops, and several

noblemen and commoners, to a letter addressed to the pope, the purport of which was, that his holiness had treated the king with injustice, and even ingratitude; and that, unless immediate attention were paid to his demands, means would be resorted to, which might lead to the assertion of an independence highly injurious to his authority.

The pope replied to this address in the mingled style of apology and reproof; excusing himself from the charge of neglecting the king's application, and reminding the writers, that it was only their love and loyalty to their sovereign which could apologise for their boldness of expression. But Henry had already taken his determination. He was too far alienated from the pontiff, and too restless, to await any farther reply to his remonstrances; and, soon after despatching the above document to Rome, he caused an act to be passed, whereby his subjects were prohibited from purchasing or publishing any thing from that court, on pain of imprisonment. This, with the solemn presentation of the arguments in the king's cause to the houses of parliament and convocation, and the yet bolder measure of suing the whole body of the clergy as guilty of violating the statutes against provisors, went far to convince the least penetrating of observers that the time was near at hand when England would no longer be a part of the pope's patrimony.

It was with no slight alarm that the higher orders of the clergy saw the king determined to pursue the above charge against them to its full extent. Two motives urged him forward in this important measure: the one resulting from his cupidity; the other from his wish to bring his power and authority into direct collision with those of the pope. In both these respects he was successful. The convocation of Canterbury offered the sum of 100,000*l.* as the price of a pardon; and that of York, 18,840*l.* On the payment of these sums, and the delivery of a solemn promise by the representatives of the clergy, that no violation of the statute of provisors

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should again take place, the king granted a general pardon. This occurrence led also to a new display of Henry's feeling respecting his supremacy in the national church. The petition of the convocation of Canterbury was addressed to him as "The protector and supreme head of the church and the clergy of England." Many of the members strongly objected to this title, and wished to add this qualifying clause,—“in so far as is lawful by the law of Christ.” Henry saw at once that the petition, in its original form, must greatly aid his present views and pretensions; and the clergy, being involved in a business which threatened them with ruin, found it expedient to silence the scruples felt on the occasion, and satisfy the ambition of the monarch.

Affairs proceeded in this train till the end of the year 1532, when Henry solemnised his marriage with Anne Boleyn; and soon after, the pope addressed him in a letter, in which he says that he had heard that he had put away his queen, and kept one Anne about him as his wife, thereby creating a general scandal, and being guilty of high contempt towards the apostolic see, before which his suit was still depending. To this epistle the king replied in the same manner as to earlier representations of the pontifical court. But no arguments could persuade the pope to change his policy in this difficult business. Instead, therefore, of answering Henry's address in a more indulgent tone, he at once cited him to appear before him in person, or by proxy. The king so far yielded as to send one of his courtiers, with the celebrated Bonner, to plead his cause before the consistory; and the accounts given of the period plainly prove, that both parties were under the influence of feelings which had nothing to do with the decision of the question according to the simple argument of right or wrong.

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1533. Excuses were still made for delay, but Henry seemed resolved to hasten the ruin of the papal power in England with a corresponding degree of adverse policy. Thus, he obtained an act of parliament, abolishing the

future payment of annates to Rome ; and, shortly after, he brought into the house a copy of the oaths taken by the bishops to himself and to the pope, demanding their revisal on the plea that the prelates, according to these oaths, were but half his subjects. Of a similar character was the bill which prohibited any appeal to Rome, either in temporal or spiritual matters ; and which, it appears, was brought forward with the direct view of rendering any further mention of the proceedings at Rome not only unnecessary but illegal.

In the midst of these proceedings, the venerable chancellor, sir Thomas More, resigned the great seal. He had lost none of his virtue by the possession or exercise of power ; and his piety being combined with a deep sense of the unlimited obedience due to the church, he beheld with equal fear and disgust the hostile preparations of his sovereign.* He took the part, therefore, which religion and honesty dictated. So far as he could free himself from the influence of intolerant zeal, he was willing to correct abuses in the same spirit as every other virtuous man who has the courage and power to attempt it : but the supremacy of the Roman pontiff was a fundamental article of his creed. It was that by which he framed the course of his policy, and which mingled itself most intimately with all his views of government, both as to the state and to the church. The proceedings of Henry, therefore, were in direct

* Sir Thomas is thus described by his own party : — “ For virtue, learning, and integrity of life of a layman, he was such a lord chancellor as England never had the like ; so true and blessed a confessor in joyfully suffering disgrace, imprisonment, loss of goods and lands, for justice’s sake, as well he may be compared to the ancient confessors in that kind. But his special and peerless prerogative is, in that he died a martyr for the defence and preservation of the unity of the catholic church. And his martyrdom is so famous and noble, that it is not inferior to the martyrdom of those that suffered because they would not deny ‘ the holy faith of Christ : nay, rather, it seemeth to be more esteemed. For, as the learned and great clerk, Dionysius of Alexandria, writeth, ‘ that martyrdom,’ saith he, ‘ that a man suffereth to preserve the unity of the church, that it be not broken and rent, is worthy no less commendations, but rather more than the martyrdom that a man suffereth because he will not sacrifice to idols : for in this cause a man doth die to save his own soul ; in the other, for the whole church.’ Therefore he is a happy and blessed martyr.” — *Wordsworth’s Ecclesiastical Biography*, from MS. in the library at Lambeth, vol. ii. p. 225.

opposition to the advice of his counsellor. They struck at the root of the maxims whereby he thought to support the grandeur of the church and the inviolable sanctity of the laws ; they rendered null those principles, the authority of which he had himself supported at the expense of human blood. But while his resignation was a duty which he owed both to his conscience and his sovereign, he greatly weakened thereby the supports on which the Romish party had hitherto depended. His character and learning enabled him, in the high station which he occupied, to answer complaints which, gathering strength every day, threatened the speedy ruin of the catholic hierarchy. He carried his virtues into retirement ; but a period of change and excitement is not the season when private worth is sufficiently valued to be allowed a voice against the general sense of public necessity.

The greatness of the loss which the catholic party suffered by the resignation of More, was only to be equalled by that of the advantage gained on the side of the reformers by the elevation of Cranmer to the archbishopric of Canterbury. That eminent man was still in Germany when Warham died ; and he owed his appointment not less to the king's estimation of his worth and sound ability, than to his inclination to promote him as an advocate of the divorce.

Cranmer found it expedient to yield to the wish of the sovereign and his advisers, and allow himself to be confirmed in his office by a bull from Rome. That he was averse to this proceeding is shown by various evidence ; and his reasons for giving up the point are not to be considered in the light of those of a man formally separated from the church, but as scruples which the most conscientious of men might deem it their duty to yield when peace and union may be promoted by the concession.

The first care of the new archbishop was to settle the minds of the people on the subject of the king's marriage. A large portion of the clergy regarded that step

as deserving of the strongest reprobation. They were readily joined by the firm adherents to the church ; and this class of opponents received an important addition to their force, by the equally indignant feelings of those who regarded the matter not so much in the light of an offence against the church or its ordinances, as against the rules of morality and social faith.

But, whatever were the sentiments of the nation on the subject, nothing could justify the marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn while his union with Catherine remained undissolved by any formal declaration or legal act. He had, it is true, the opinion of many universities, and learned divines and casuists, in his favour ; but a mere statement of opinion had never been considered of sufficient weight to dissolve a solemn compact, nor ever can be received as of such authority where the happiness of mankind is believed to depend on just laws and an enlightened government. The only apology that can be made for Henry is this ; —that he had ceased to regard the Roman court as entitled to pronounce against him, but knew not, at present, whether any national tribunal could be invested with a power sufficiently sacred and independent to pronounce the sentence.

The convocation, though not without much opposition in the lower house, pronounced the marriage of the king with Anne Boleyn lawful. Henry now lost no time in making the event known through the various European courts ; and the consequences of the step were immediately foreseen. At Rome, the question of the divorce still continued a subject of debate ; and the monarch seemed to retain some of his former anxiety respecting the decision of the head of the catholic church. But it was impossible for either the one or the other to yield the position he had taken. The king, by acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, exposed himself to the charge of living in a state of adultery ; and the pope, by any appearance of countenancing the late marriage, or leaving the monarch's appeal from himself to the learned

of Christendom unnoticed, endangered for ever the highest prerogatives of his office.

But had the pontiff and Henry been willing to compromise the business, their several advisers would not have allowed them to remain in this pacific disposition. The cardinals zealously urged his holiness to lose no time in adopting measures which would oblige the king to humble himself to the censures of the church ; while the rising chiefs of the protestant party in England as energetically argued, that the independence of the crown, and the safety of the national church, were wholly depending, at the present moment, on the perseverance of the king in the course which he had just adopted. The arguments thus advanced were seconded by the monarch's own inclinations. Measures obtained a hearing, which, a few short years before, would have been regarded with suspicion, and even horror ; the apprehensions of sir Thomas More were fulfilled ; and the supporters of the papal authority, both at home and abroad, insisted more earnestly from day to day on the necessity of the pontiff's adopting decided measures for the support of his invaded authority.

Urged into action by the members of his own court, and equally so by the imperialists, the pope found himself obliged to pursue a course which his own prudence or timidity would have deferred to a far distant period. By a vote of the consistory, Henry's marriage with Catherine was declared lawful ; and it was intimated, that if he refused to receive her again as his wife, he would stand exposed to the heaviest censures of the church. This sentence was confirmed by a second vote, on the arrival of an ambassador from England, charged with the duty of advocating the royal cause ; and the small remaining hope of a compromise was thus for ever destroyed.

The news of this proceeding at Rome gave a fresh impulse to the policy of the reformers in England. Both the parliament and the convocation were in favour of the king's supremacy. The idea of a national and in-

dependent church was beginning to be developed in the minds even of the people ; and this alone was now wanted to free the nation from the tyranny under which it had so long groaned.

It ought never to be forgotten, that the reformation in this country was not produced by any sudden movement of either zeal or policy. Allowing that self-interest, or passion, furnished the inducement for change on the side of the king, his will, arbitrary as it was, could have effected little, had he not been favoured by the inclinations of the people, and a vast body of learned and conscientious divines. With all his efforts, and notwithstanding the testimonies given in his favour, the little actually effected took many years to accomplish ; and though it is true that the monarch sought to confirm his new marriage by rendering himself independent of Rome, yet it is equally certain, that he had not personally thrown off his allegiance to the pope till the parliament and convocation had made extensive inroads upon the pontifical rights. The reformation in England was effected by a twofold process, the parts of which seemed brought to maturity independently of each other. Thus, while the followers of Wickliffe, Luther, and Zuingle were going through the country, proclaiming, with the Bible in their hands, the most important doctrines of the Gospel, the political chiefs of the nation were slowly but effectually laying the foundations of that independence which would secure to such preachers the liberty of declaring divine truth, in all its fulness and purity, from every pulpit in the land.

The question of the king's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters was discussed with a care and freedom becoming the importance of the subject ; and in the month of March a bill was passed, which set aside for ever the pope's authority over the church of this country. Other acts were soon after passed, which tended to confirm both the dignity of the monarch and the liberty of the subject. The whole face of public affairs was thus changed ; and the spirit of protestantism rose triumphant

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over the bigotry, the pride, and the cruelty which had so long characterised the rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, of England.

But, unhappily, this victory of the reformed party was not pursued with the pure and generous feelings which the Gospel inculcates. There were many, who, without doubt, conscientiously adhered to the former system of ecclesiastical polity, and who must have violated truth and honesty had they acknowledged the king's supremacy. Among these stood conspicuously forth Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and sir Thomas More. The circumstances which led to their ruin, afford a melancholy proof of the weakness of those eminent men in matters connected with their zeal for the Roman church ; but they afford a still stronger instance of the jealousy and tyranny of the government in those days, and of the facility with which the lives of the most virtuous of the people might be sacrificed to the suspicions of a monarch and the imperfection of the laws. Neither More nor Fisher would acknowledge Henry as the head of the national church ; and, in the midst of the contentions which this resistance fomented, the impostures of a fanatic, known by the name of the Maid of Kent, precipitated the catastrophe which awaited them. They were accused of a treasonable acquaintance with her designs ; and both perished on the scaffold —the victims, not of religious zeal or intolerance, but of a haughty and unjust king.

CHAP. XV.

ACCESSION OF PAUL III. — PROCEEDINGS RESPECTING A GENERAL COUNCIL. — THE POPE'S NUNCIO AT WITTEMBERG. — LUTHER'S FIRMFNESS. — ASSEMBLY OF THE PROTESTANTS AT SMALCALDE. — SENTIMENTS OF THE KING OF FRANCE. — OF HENRY VIII. — RENEWAL OF THE LEAGUE. — THE ANA-BAPTISTS.

THE accession of the cardinal Farnese, who assumed the title of Paul III., to the pontifical throne, infused fresh vigour into the counsels of the Roman see. He was bold and politic; and the dissoluteness of his early course having made him a father, he added to the proper cares of his new station, the anxiety to provide for his offspring out of the resources of the church. He began his labours, therefore, with equal energy and caution. Difficulties surrounded him on all sides: but he had powerful supporters; and it required little to persuade him into the belief, that united policy and courage might recover a considerable portion of the ground which had been lost by the weakness and incapacity of preceding pontiffs.

Notwithstanding the proofs which had been given A. D. by the protestants, of their determination to press the 1535. calling of a general and free council, Paul appears to have entertained some hopes of being able to resist their influence.* One of his first measures was to send Peter

* It is generally supposed that Paul III. was far more inclined to allow the calling of a council than his predecessor, Clement VII.: but that he had no better disposition to yield any point which could be defended, is plain from the manner in which he is said to have received his legate's intimation respecting the necessity of employing force. "He desired nothing better," says the continuator of Fleury; "and he spoke of it to the emperor on his visit to Rome a few months after. The emperor," it is added, "agreed with his holiness on the subject; but observed, that before war was made with the Lutherans in Germany, a council must be held, that they might be left without excuse." — *Cont. Fleury*, liv. 135. n. 1.

Paul Verger, as his minister, into Germany. That skilful diplomatist received instructions to assure the princes and other chiefs of the reformers, that it was the pontiff's earnest desire to assemble a council which should, in every respect, fulfil the wish of pious and honest minds ; but that it should be governed by the rules of former councils ; and that, with regard to the place of meeting, Mantua was the town on which he had determined, as offering the greatest accommodation, and as most conveniently situated both for himself and others. The first whom the ambassador addressed on the subject, was the elector of Saxony. He appealed to him in the strongest language which a wish to conciliate could inspire ; and even endeavoured to make it appear, that if any obstacle now existed to the calling of the council, it was not on the part of the pope, but his own. But the elector was as cautious as the minister was politic and eloquent. He simply replied, that he would give his answer to the suggestions of the pontiff as soon as he had consulted his allies.

On the arrival of Paul Verger at Wittemberg, Luther was invited to an interview with him at the residence of the chief magistrate. The great reformer amused himself with the idea of this meeting ; and early on the morning of the day sent for his barber, to whom, on entering, he said, that he had been summoned to attend the nuncio of the most holy father, and did not wish to go unshorn ; hoping that he might be taken for a younger man than he was, and so frighten his enemies with the notion that he had still a long while to live. He then put on his best suit of clothes, and even decorated himself with a golden ornament given him by the elector. When the hairdresser expressed his fears that some offence might thence arise, Luther replied, " They have greatly scandalised us ; and this is the only way in which we can act with serpents and foxes."

Luther was accompanied to the castle by Pomeranus ; and, on ascending the carriage, laughingly exclaimed, " Behold the German pope, and cardinal Pomeranus !

This is the work of God." Mutual salutations having passed between him and the nuncio, and the subject of the council being introduced, Luther observed, that he did not believe the pope was serious in his promises; and that he feared, even were a council held, that its deliberations would be wasted on questions of no importance to the great interests of Christendom. "I and my associates," said he, "are convinced by the Holy Spirit of the truth of our doctrine, and need no council to determine for us; but there are others, who, ignorant and sorrowful, and oppressed by tyranny, know not what they ought, or what they ought not, to believe. Let a council then be called: I will be present, though it should condemn me to be burnt." On the legate's asking him in what place he would wish it to be held, he replied, "Wherever you like." — "At Bologna," said the former. "And whose is Bologna?" asked Luther. On being answered, that it was the pope's, he exclaimed, "Good God! and has the pope seized this city too? But I will come even there." The nuncio then added, that the pontiff proposed making a journey to Wittenberg. "Let him come," said Luther; "he will be treated with ridicule." — "But shall he come armed or unarmed?" rejoined the ambassador. "It matters not," was the answer: "we shall be ready for him, however he comes." To the question put by the legate, "whether priests were consecrated in Saxony," Luther replied, "They are consecrated; for the pope would not ordain them for us; and behold, here sits a bishop," (pointing to Pomeranus), "whom we have consecrated."

It is evident, from the manner in which this conversation was carried on, that the reformer had, at the present time, little fear of the pontiff, but that he entertained the worst suspicions as to the sincerity of his professions respecting the calling of a council. He concealed none of his feelings — none of his intentions. Whatever were the plans of the Roman hierarchy, he rested with confidence on the support which he had

derived from Scripture, and the piety, the worth, and perseverance of his associates. In these sentiments the elector readily joined. He desired it to be understood, it is said, that he did not doubt the good faith of the emperor, or king Ferdinand; and that, with regard to the council, it was not so much for the sake of the protestants, as for those who were ignorant of their doctrines, that he desired such an assembly to be called. "Our opinions," he added, "rest not on the learning or wisdom of men, but on the firm and solid rock, the word of God, which shall remain for ever, and yield not to the gates of hell."

The cause of the reformation was greatly advanced by this calm and noble conduct. Even Verger himself felt moved at the display of so much wisdom among men whom he had been taught to regard as the enemies of order and religion. The impressions thus left on his mind, produced in due time their proper results; and the papal legate became a zealous supporter and prelate of the reformed church.

At an assembly of the protestant leaders, held at Smalcalde in the month of December, the disposition of the pope, as made known by Verger, formed the subject of a long deliberation. Their answer to his demands was firm and prudent. They concealed not the fears they entertained for the safety of their brethren, who might attend the council without, the most solemn pledges for their protection: they declared their reasons for doubting the principles on which the business of the assembly would be carried on; and summed up their remarks by a direct appeal from the selfish interestedness of the pontiff, to the honour and magnanimity of their temporal rulers. "The cause," said they, "is that of the whole world; and it is for the emperor and the princes to determine the matter according to the rules of truth and equity; in doing which they will only be following the example of those times, when unholy bishops were deposed by their people, and popes by the emperor and the church. We cannot forget," they

added, "that the pontiffs of this age have not only condemned by words, but have oppressed and inhumanly punished by their decrees, those who refuse to obey them. As the appeal is against this tyranny, the pope is a party concerned, and another power must be introduced to determine what is just. We only desire to secure an impartial tribunal: let its consultations be conformable to Scripture, and the example of the ancient church; we will give our aid, and trust that by these means Christ will be glorified, and the church restored to tranquillity."

The king of France was now meditating a war in Italy, and saw at once how important a point would be gained, could he procure the assistance of the protestant princes; he therefore sent an ambassador to the meeting at Smalcalde, and charged him to make the best apology in his power for the late transactions against the reformers in France, and to assure the assembly that his majesty had the most earnest wish to conciliate their friendship, and, as far as his conscience would allow, to promote their interests. To this the meeting replied in a manner as courteous as it was guarded. The greatest satisfaction was expressed at the assurances given respecting the king's friendly feeling; and the assembly promised, in return, that, so far as its members were at liberty to act independently of the emperor and the empire, they would lend no succour to his enemies.

But Bellay did not trust solely to the effect which his persuasions might have on the assembly: he sought the acquaintance of Melancthon, Sturmius, and several other eminent reformers, to whom he spoke of his master's inclination to favour their cause in terms which necessarily indicate one of two things: either that he dreaded the power and resentment of the protestants, or was beginning to think too well of their doctrines to remain long opposed to their diffusion in his kingdom. According to the account given by Spalatin, it was clearly deducible from the language of the ambassador, that the French monarch agreed with them in their

notions respecting the foundation of the papal power, as human, and not divine ; and, even in respect to their doctrine of the eucharist, which he is said to have supported against the earnest advice of his theologians. On the nature of the mass, with its various ceremonies, on the worship of images, on the merits of the saints, and on free-will, he is represented as equally inclined to yield many important points to the reformers. The same may be said of his views of purgatory, good works, monastic vows, the marriage of priests, and the administration of the eucharist in both kinds.

Some doubt has been expressed by controversialists respecting the truth of this report ; but it is confirmed by collateral as well as direct proof. Even Maimbourg himself allows that the mind of Francis had been greatly wrought upon by the persuasions of his sister, the queen of Navarre ; to this may be added, that he was now endeavouring to soften the indignation of a powerful party ; and that his ambassador, a political rhetorician, may be supposed to have employed expressions which seemed best calculated to produce the desired effect. Neither party, in fact, ought to have attributed such importance to the subject. The opinion of the king of France was of consequence at the moment, his power and influence being sufficient to furnish the reformers with the means of a formidable resistance to their oppressors ; but, the occasion past, his constancy or his vacillation can add no weight to the argument on either side. So little inclined, moreover, were the protestants to place any trust in the declarations of the ambassador, that, even when they were most likely to be influenced by his eloquence, they proved themselves superior to the temptations it held out, and could neither be persuaded nor deceived into accepting an alliance which might involve them in a violation of allegiance to the emperor.

It was not the king of France only who saw fit to seek the friendship and assistance of this rising confederacy : Henry VIII. also sent an ambassador to Smal-

calde. The person chosen for the mission was Fox, lately made bishop of Hereford. In his address to the assembly, he stated that the king was not only well disposed towards the elector of Saxony and his associates, but had proved his inclination to favour the protestant cause by the changes introduced in the English church. He warned them, in the name of the monarch, against allowing any jealousy or schism in the great body of reformers to weaken their strength in the approaching council ; and rested this advice on the fact, that there had always been cause in the church for the exercise of charity among its several members. But if peace was to be secured, he said, it must be established on the foundation of Scripture ; against which the pope had exercised every means he could command. Till his power, his cruelty, and his tyranny, therefore, were destroyed, a peace of this kind must never be expected. After alluding to the manner in which the papal domination had been destroyed in England, the ambassador repeated, with great earnestness, the king's advice to the protestants, not to take any part in a council held only to confirm the power of the pontiff, or give permanency to abrogated rights and superstitions. The reply which the assembly gave to the English ambassador, like that to the envoy of the king of France, was distinguished by its calm good sense and piety. Not the most severe examination of the language and sentiments of these addresses could lead to the detection of any wish, on the part of the reformers, to conciliate the friendship of the great and powerful by the slightest sacrifice of principle or Christian independence. Affairs were now at a juncture when the assistance of France and England might have produced the most important results in the cause of religious liberty ; but the wise and good men, at the head of the protestant party, judged that any advantage would be too dearly purchased if the price paid were even a seeming succumbing to worldly expediency.

On the eve of Christmas-day, the assembly concluded

its deliberations by passing a decree which established the continuance of the league till the year 1545 ; and provided for the admission of all such into the protestant confederacy as were willing to sign the confession of Augsburg, and take their part in whatever struggles the support of that evangelical statement of faith might render necessary. To these conditions many princes and cities, not yet in the league, readily agreed : among the former were the duke of Wirtemberg and the princes of Pomerania ; and among the latter, the cities of Frankfort, Augsburg, Hamburg, and Hanover.

In the midst of these events, the anabaptists were pursuing their fanatical course with a steadiness and success which could hardly have been looked for after the signal defeat of Muncer. It was not, however, in this case, the vigour of fanaticism which insured success : it was the state of the people, and of parties. The lower class of Germans were as yet but little prepared to change the pomps of their early faith, for a system which should wholly depend for its demonstration on the simple word of truth. They had not yet enjoyed the advantage of hearing that word expounded by good and wise men : it was by the clamour of wild enthusiasts that the vast mass of the peasantry had been roused from the dreams of superstition. To this they could listen, for it came with all the stimulants of wonder ; it required no preparation of the heart or mind to make the promises which it conveyed acceptable : they could be understood by the weakest mind, and were of a nature to move the dullest and coldest heart. " We come," said the pretended prophets, " with messages from heaven. The hour is arrived when freedom and glory shall be the reward of those who assert the honour of Christ and of his cross. No longer the slaves of necessity and the laws of the world, we overcome by our faith ; and already are fulfilled in us the promises of the Most High. Happy, then, are you, whom the spirit of the Lord moves to join our ranks. Hasten to the warfare, and the rewards which await our triumph-

ant progress. The enemy shall fall before us, and the spoil of his camps shall furnish our feast."

By exhortations abounding in assurances of this kind, the hopes of the people, who could not help feeling the truth of that part of them which spoke of their present degradation, were excited day by day. The church, with all its powers and grandeur, seemed to crumble beneath the blast of the mighty rushing wind, which proclaimed the presence of the Almighty Spirit. An enthusiasm thus inspired was resistless ; but neither had the scriptural teaching of Luther any share in exciting it, nor could it have produced, according to ordinary calculation, such a vivid impression on the minds of people situated like the German peasantry. It offered food to souls hungering after righteousness and knowledge, but not excitement for the ignorant, or bribes for the ambitious.

This distinction between the two parties was fully understood by the parties themselves : no attempt at conciliation could, it was felt, succeed. The anabaptists pursued their designs with as close an adherence to the plan traced out by their first leaders, as the reformers of Wittemberg followed that of Luther. But time has its influence even on the wildest enthusiasm ; and these bold assertors of a spiritual freedom which set all law at defiance, had begun to discover the necessity of making use of a policy which should give the semblance of government to the empire they pretended to have founded.

It was in the city of Munster that this new empire of superstition and imposture assumed its most formidable aspect. The fortifications, which rendered the town one of the strongest in Germany, might have kept out an army ; but it was seized upon, as if totally helpless, by men who came armed with the weapons of zeal and eloquence. Bernard Rotman had long been known as one of the most enthusiastic of the reformed teachers when he was admitted into the city. The party who introduced him in vain sought for a church in which he

might exercise his office. But this was of little consequence to a man of his character ; and, while the doors of the churches were closed against him, Rotman was to be heard declaiming from a pulpit placed before the porch.*

Joined soon after by some associates from Hesse, the work of proselytism went rapidly on ; and, to the consternation of the clergy of the city, not only the people, but the magistrates, evinced a willingness to adopt both their doctrines and their views respecting the nature of the church. The efforts of the catholics to stem the torrent proved utterly fruitless. A fresh demand was made for pulpits ; and the senate passed a decree which prohibited the established clergy from any further exercise of their office. Remonstrance was vain ; and they had no alternative but to seek redress by force. In this they were encouraged by the bishop of the diocese, who furnished them with the means of making a regular assault on the town. From a little village in the neighbourhood they sent a message to the senate, demanding the restoration of the churches, and the settlement of affairs on their former basis. Instead of returning an answer to this demand, the people of Munster kept the messenger a prisoner, and, collecting themselves into a band of about 900 persons, proceeded in the night to the village where the clergy and their friends were awaiting a reply to their message. Thus surprised, the latter were obliged to submit to conditions ; and an agreement was entered into whereby six churches were given up to the sectaries, and many of the ancient rites abolished as superstitious ; the catholics retaining exclusive authority in the cathedral, which the city consented to leave in the possession of all its privileges and revenues.

The concord which followed this settlement of the dispute between the two parties was worthy of the highest praise ; and would have led, had it been preserved,

* Seckendorf, lib. iii. xli. 3. Sleidan.

to many profitable results. But scarcely was peace restored, when the famous John of Leyden made his appearance in the city, and began to preach, in the most violent language of fanaticism, the doctrines of the anabaptists. Bernard Rotman, though bold and zealous, and secretly an anabaptist, had confined himself to the teaching of truths which formed the general theme of the evangelical preachers. John of Leyden, on the contrary, went the full lengths to which an uneducated mind can be led by unmodified enthusiasm. "Do you believe," said he to the reformers, "that there can be any efficacy in the baptism of infants?" and when they answered him in the affirmative, he declared himself an enemy to their doctrine, and immediately began to address the people in a strain which again threw all things into confusion.

To the astonishment of the senate, who had attempted to banish John of Leyden and his associates from the city, Bernard Rotman now publicly declared himself a believer in their doctrines, and spoke the same language as the fiercest of the sect respecting the baptism of infants. But, notwithstanding his influence, the senate proceeded to pass a decree which condemned the party to banishment; and the reformers seemed to have secured a complete triumph over these dangerous rivals. Unfortunately, their success was but brief: the anabaptists, with that inventiveness which is so frequently found in connection with the highest degrees of fanaticism, while they apparently yielded to the storm, only employed the occasion to entrench themselves more securely in the very heart of the city. Instead of retreating, they lay concealed among such of the inhabitants as had manifested a willingness to listen to their exhortations; and, soon after, to the consternation of their opponents, appeared with unexpected reinforcements to demand the free exercise of their ministry.

The landgrave, aware of these occurrences, and A. D. anxious for the tranquillity of the city, had sent two 1534. preachers of considerable ability to support the evan-

gelical party and doctrines. Acting in strict accordance with the principles of the Reformation, these divines offered to meet the leaders of the anabaptists in open conference, and to examine their several opinions by an immediate appeal to the word of God. Nothing could be more reasonable than such a proposition ; but these ultra-protestants proved themselves to be as adverse to Scripture as the strictest advocates of catholicism. The offer of the evangelical teachers was rejected ; and the followers of John of Leyden, finding that an inspiration of their own would much better suit their purpose than that which was divine, began to run through the streets, warning every one who would escape destruction to save himself by being straightway re-baptized.

A general assembling of the sect took place after this ; and, the signal given, the whole body precipitated themselves on the defenceless inhabitants. The strong places of the city were soon taken, and only one retreat remained to the opposite party. In this they made an obstinate defence ; and the anabaptists, otherwise victorious, agreed to terms. Peace was thus restored for a time ; but the busy spirit of the leaders would not allow it to continue. Messages were secretly sent to the members of the sect dwelling in the neighbouring towns and villages, to hasten to Munster. The summons was readily obeyed ; crowds of fanatics, malcontents, and beggars flocked to the city ; and the respectable inhabitants retreating in terror from such a multitude, Rotman and his companions remained almost sole masters of the place.*

The principal associates of Rotman on this occasion were Bernard Knipperdoling, John of Leyden, and John Matthew, who arrogated to himself the honour of the chief of the prophets. At the instigation of these men, a senate was constituted, consuls were elected, and the city was put under a form of government agreeable to their purposes. The first decree of the new senate directed that the inhabitants should bring all the

* Sleidan.

money and furniture they possessed to a certain place, there to be distributed according to the will of the prophets. Disobedience to this order was threatened with the direst punishment ; and several of the unfortunate people, tempted to express their fears or their doubts, were miserably butchered. Such was the state of things when the bishop of Munster, having collected a small army, laid siege to the city. But so far was this from changing the conduct of the fanatics, that it only seemed to increase their madness and intemperance. John of Leyden, to establish at the same time his own dignity and the safety of the new order of things, pretended to fall into a trance ; and, when he awoke, made known to his followers that he had seen a vision, in which the Almighty directed him to name twelve heads of the people, like those of the twelve tribes of Israel. The most important part, however, of this revelation referred to the laws of marriage, which the prophet said were now changed, or abrogated, it being the present privilege of every Christian man to marry as many wives as he chose. John of Leyden manifested his confidence in his own revelation by immediately marrying three, among whom was the widow of Matthew, lately slain by a soldier of the besieging army.

A proceeding of this nature required many arguments and explanations for its support ; and the prophet having assembled the various teachers of the sect, directed them to prove the truth of his doctrine from Scripture. Such an order might be more easily given than executed : this was seen by the hesitating looks of the puzzled theologians ; but the enthusiasm, or threats, of their leader prevailed, and they promised to perform this new duty of evangelical teaching to the best of their ability.

The scandals which attended the promulgation of such a rule may easily be imagined. Even those who had borne with the decree which had obliged them to sacrifice their property, could not patiently suffer the violations of decency which were now daily occurring. An attempt was made at resistance, and some of the leaders

of the anabaptists fell into the hands of the citizens. The latter, however, had little reason to rejoice at their success; for the enemy rallying, they were attacked and routed, and fifty of their number fell a sacrifice to the vengeance of the enraged fanatics.

Even these triumphs did not content John of Leyden and his companions. They were now sole masters of the city; but the taste of power which they thereby enjoyed only served as an incentive to fresh violations of social order. A new prophet, by trade a watchmaker, who joined their ranks about this time, furnished them with the opportunity of showing the degree of strength to which their zeal had arisen. Pretending that he was charged with a message from Heaven, he solemnly called together a multitude of people, and declared that it was the will of God that John of Leyden should be proclaimed the king of all the earth, and that he should go forth, at the head of an army, for the destruction of worldly princes, and all who refused to partake of the regenerating grace of God.*

John of Leyden did not shrink from the sovereignty thus offered him, but stated that he had himself received a revelation on the subject, which he refrained from making known, lest he might be accused of presumptuously claiming the dignity on his own testimony. This concurrence between the two prophets was regarded with awe and wonder by the people; and the new sovereign ascended his throne, amid the applauses of as abject an assembly of subjects as ever hailed the appearance of the tyrant whom they dreaded.

Like rulers of another class, John of Leyden discovered that it would be much easier to govern by his own will, than according to the guidance of others. His first act, therefore, was to put down the Council of Twelve, which had hitherto formed the government of the city: his next was to order the preparation of the

* * Sleidan. Luther, in his address to his beloved Germans, shows in a striking manner the resemblance between the conduct of the anabaptists and that of many of the papists. *Sämtliche Schriften*, t. xvi. p. 1964.

insignia of royalty ; that is, two crowns, a sceptre, and collar,— all of which were to be of the purest metal,— a sword, and a throne. Arrayed in his royal ornaments, and surrounded by the officers of his court, he took his seat on the throne, which was placed in an open part of the city, and, in imitation of the kings of old, invited the people to bring their causes before him, that he might pass judgment according to the wisdom with which he was endowed from on high. Among those who came to make appeals before this notable tribunal, they were by far the most numerous, it is said, whose complaints regarded the subject of marriage. While some sought redress for the loss of wives or husbands whom the new law had set free, others came for relief from the burdens which the liberality of the prophet had unwittingly put upon their shoulders.

Such was the watchfulness with which the city was guarded by order of the king, that the bishop found all the forces he could muster insufficient for the siege. But affairs were now arrived at a point which demanded the interference of the surrounding states, unless principles were to be allowed which would speedily shake to pieces the whole fabric of society. The matter was brought before an assembly of princes at Coblentz ; and a grant was made to the bishop of 3000 infantry and 300 horse for six months. From the application made to other princes, and to king Ferdinand himself, it is clear that the force thus allowed was not regarded as sufficient to secure success. The alarm had spread like an infection, and not without cause. Men's minds were agitated with a thousand doubts, and it was difficult to foretel what would be the result of an appeal made with such flattering promises as those of the fanatics of Munster to young and enthusiastic minds.

Fear seems to have been hitherto a stranger to John of Leyden and his companions. Though so closely surrounded by the troops of the bishop, that famine threatened them with all its horrors, they continued to plan the most extensive projects for converting the world

or subduing it. On a certain day, the king summoned his subjects, by sound of trumpet, to meet, with arms, in the environs of the cathedral. A repast had been prepared there for 4000 persons, and they were attended during the meal by the king and the queen themselves. At the close of the banquet, the former took a piece of bread in his hand, and, breaking it as he passed along the ranks, said to each of the guests, "Take, eat, and declare the death of the Lord." The queen carried about the cup, presenting it with similar words; and, all having partaken of the wine, the king demanded of the assembly a solemn promise of obedience. This was unanimously accorded; and he proceeded to say, that it was the order of the Father that twenty-eight doctors should be sent forth into the four quarters of the world to spread abroad the doctrine which was taught in Munster.

The commission thus given was executed with a zeal and resolution deserving a better cause. Each of the missionaries had his particular destination, and he commenced his labours with calling the people to repentance, for that the kingdom of Christ was come, and would prove the ruin of those who listened not to their exhortations. When taken before the magistrates, they persisted in the same declarations; and, according to the command of their chief, spread their mantle on the ground, depositing a piece of gold upon it; the sign, they said, of the abandonment of the place to its fate. This conduct was not often patiently witnessed by the authorities; and the unfortunate enthusiasts, seized and thrown into prison, were silenced by the most cruel tortures and death. Only one of the twenty-eight escaped this end.

While the emissaries of the sect were thus labouring and suffering, the people of Munster became daily more terrified at the prospect before them. The princes assembled at Coblenz had, with honourable humanity, addressed a letter to these deluded victims of imposture, imploring them to desist from a course of conduct which could only terminate either in their own destruction, or

the ruin of every thing valuable to Christians. John of Leyden possessed sufficient influence to render this, and every other effort of the kind, abortive. He promised the people that, if they would remain patient, the approaching Easter would end their trials, and crown them with a glorious triumph.*

The landgrave of Hesse viewed these proceedings with equal alarm and sorrow. He had always manifested an inclination to carry the principle of religious liberty to its farthest limits. So well were his dispositions known on this point, that John of Leyden, and his fellow prophets, when pouring out their anathemas against all other princes, pretended to spare him. But, whatever had been his former wish to treat them with lenity, he now found that their daring fanaticism defied any species of Christian tolerance. In a book which they published about this time, and also in their reply to the exhortations of the assembly at Coblentz, they defended their conduct by an assertion of plenary inspiration, and the wildest perversions of Scriptural truth. The landgrave condescended to employ the most learned of his theologians in confuting these wretched reveries. But his indulgence only added fuel to the flame, and they continued to pour forth their inventions, as if triumphing in the opportunity afforded for their display.

At length the hour promised as the season of deliverance approached. The horrors of famine and disease had already begun their work among the inhabitants of Munster. Every day added to the number of the victims who sank under the weight of their misery. The glow of enthusiasm no longer supported them; and, as they poured out their last sighs, they revealed to their wretched companions in misfortune the sad tidings that they suffered all these things for the sake of a base impostor.

Notwithstanding the gloomy prospect which presented itself on all sides to the besieged, John of Leyden appeared among the people with the same bold and confi-

* Sleidan.

dent looks. One of his queens ventured to sympathies with the famishing creatures around her, and to express some doubt respecting the right of her consort to enjoy luxuries, while his people were dying of hunger. She was called before him. The other queens attended her, and were warned against committing a like offence by beholding her head in an instant severed from her shoulders. Singing and dancing followed the execution ; and the haggard multitude were compelled to praise God in this manner, till their fainting limbs would no longer support them.

A. D.
1535. Several months had now passed since the meeting of the princes at Coblentz, but nothing had been done to put an end to this disgraceful reign of fanaticism and imposture. Some of the cities, whose deputies were present at the assembly, disputed the right of the princes to make any decree on the subject ; and, though they acknowledged the necessity of a vigorous interference, refused to grant any subsidy till ordered to do so by a sufficient authority. But in the month of April a diet assembled at Worms ; and after some consultation, it was agreed that 20,000 gold crowns a month should be allowed for the expenses of the siege ; and the bishop immediately appointed the count of Oberstein general of the army.

The city was now beset by a large body of well-trained troops ; and it might have been expected that a few days would suffice to carry a place garrisoned by a multitude of undisciplined and famishing enthusiasts. But John of Leyden proved himself possessed of that inexhaustible vigour, and unwearied watchfulness, which so often successfully defy the best exercises of every other kind of power. The people in general would have gladly opened the gates to the besiegers. They were appealed to on the part of the bishop and the general by the most solemn assurances of protection, if they would prevent, by a timely submission, the necessity of further hostilities. Aware of his danger, the pretended king let nothing escape his observation ; and answers were sent, under his orders,

to the addresses above noticed, which represented the citizens of Munster as glorying in their tribulation, and still looking forward to the triumph which had been promised them by their prophet.

On the 22d of June, the bishop again addressed the inhabitants, but to no effect. All hopes of conciliation were thus cut off; and two fugitives from the city being taken, information was obtained respecting the best points at which the fortress might be attacked. On the night of the 24th, a small but select band was sent to gain possession of the pass and one of the ramparts. The sentinels were at their posts, but were soon killed; and an unguarded gate presenting itself to the assailants, the little band found their way into the city. An obstinate rencontre followed. The few that retained any strength gathered round the king, resolved to defend him to the last. Their courage, animated by a zeal which seemed to recover all its strength at this moment of peril, prevailed over every effort of the soldiers. The ground was strewn with the dying and the dead; and for the instant, it might have been supposed that the words of the prophet were about to be fulfilled. Despair seized the routed assailants; and they would have gladly retreated, but were prevented by the fury of the enemy, and the height of the walls. At length two or three of the soldiers forced their way to a gate, and, having contrived to open it, admitted the troops. The king and Knipperdoling were taken alive. Rotman threw himself into the midst of the assailants, and fell covered with wounds. For a short time, the people continued to carry on the conflict with unabated fury; but, overpowered by numbers, the few that remained alive flung down their arms, and prayed for mercy.

Thus ended the reign of John of Leyden. Never had the name of Christianity been employed to support a grosser imposture. Licentiousness and cruelty marked every step of its progress; and had not Divine Providence brought it to a speedy termination, every vice which shrouded its head on the downfall of heathenism

would have been resuscitated and again deified. The fate of the deposed pretender was soon determined. Hurried from place to place, he was at length brought before the bishop of Munster, the archbishop of Cologne, and the envoys of the duke of Cleves. By these personages he was questioned as to the motives of his conduct, and the foundation of the opinions which he propagated with such a furious zeal. At first he defended himself with all the arguments of fervent enthusiasm. Then he yielded somewhat to the fears inspired by the terrible punishment which he saw awaited him, and at last even offered, it is said, to compromise the interests of his party for the hopes of personal safety. But neither his humility nor his arguments availed him. He was taken, with his two companions, Knipperdoling and another, and fastened to a scaffold. Thus exposed to the ridicule or the compassion of the multitude, they beheld the executioners approach with feelings proportioned to the strength of their hearts, the sincerity of their professions, or the light they enjoyed by a late discovery of their error. John of Leyden himself was humble and devout. His fellow-sufferers uttered with their last breath the horrors of their creed. The executioners, armed with burning pincers, tore their flesh piecemeal from the bones, and their mutilated bodies, as soon as life was extinct, were hung up in iron cages, a terror to the multitude, and an everlasting disgrace to those who ordained and witnessed the infliction of such a punishment.

Events followed the occurrences here recorded which contributed to precipitate, at least in appearance, the expected issue of the struggle. The king of England sent his ambassador to solicit the alliance of the protestants ; and war was declared between the king of France and the emperor. Meeting after meeting took place. A concord was entered into at Wittemberg between the Swiss and German reformers ; new rights and privileges were claimed by them ; and all Europe seemed occupied in watching their determined efforts for religious freedom.

The changes effected in Augsburg were the cause of fresh irritation on the part of the catholics ; and a new league was formed by the archbishop of Mentz, and other chiefs of the party. Resolved to establish the citizens in the fullest enjoyment of their religious liberty, the senate had taken possession of the churches, and given them over to such ministers as were willing to perform the service according to the reformed principles. There was reason to fear that the representations made to the emperor on this subject might excite him to some new act of oppression against the whole protestant community. To avert this, therefore, they sent a deputation to his majesty, charged with the justification of these proceedings, and an assurance that the reports which had been circulated respecting their alliance with the king of France were not founded in truth.*

At a meeting of the princes, at Smalcalde, in the month of February, the emperor replied to this address, by his minister, Matthias Helde. The spirit of conciliation breathed throughout the speech of the envoy. He lamented the doubts which appeared to disturb the minds of the protestants respecting the emperor's clemency ; reproved their conduct in giving even a seeming encouragement to the machinations of the French king ; exhorted them to afford the emperor a loyal support in the present state of affairs, and to do all in their power to promote the efficiency and authority of the council, to the summoning of which they had originally so greatly contributed. In regard to the complaints made against the judges, the protestants, he said, had been the sole cause of the confusion which reigned in the courts ; for they had claimed an exemption from the sentence of the law on the plea of religion, when the matter, properly considered, had no relation whatever to the dogmas of their faith : " but if," he added,

* Sleidan. Seckendorf. Luther wrote in the most affectionate terms to the senate of Augsburg ; acknowledged with joy the worth and power of their ministers, and prayed that they might be strengthened by divine grace to continue the struggle against the corruptions of the age. — *Briefe*, t. iv. p. 693. and t. v. p. 13.

“the judges can be convicted of any proceeding contrary to the rule laid down by the emperor, his majesty will punish them according to the law published at Ratisbonne.”

The reply of the princes was not given till some days after the delivery of this address. They commenced with many assurances of their gratitude and loyalty to the emperor; but justified their conduct as rendered necessary by the dangers and difficulties with which they were continually surrounded. They had claimed for the people of Augsburg, and others who had joined their party since the pacification of Nuremberg, the same privileges as they themselves enjoyed: to this they were led by the plainest dictates of duty and brotherly affection; and they persisted in the demand, as a condition from which nothing could induce them to depart. It is difficult, in fact, to see how they could have acted otherwise. When they first struggled for liberty themselves, it was on the plea that they ought not to be oppressed by violence for their conscientious worship of God, or their profession of a belief founded on Scripture. The same plea might be urged with precisely the same force by the later converts. No gift or grant was claimed from imperial generosity, but simply that protection which it was the height of injustice to refuse. When they joined the ranks of the protestants, therefore, they did not come into the possession of advantages to which they had no right, or to institute a claim to which some prior services ought to have been rendered, but exposed themselves to a danger against which the general principles of justice had already provided a defence. To have left them exposed to the persecutions endured before the right of religious freedom was recognised, would have been a declaration on the part of the earlier protestants, that the safety they enjoyed was nothing more than a partial indulgence; an acknowledgment which would have rendered their state now worse than it was at the beginning.

Another subject of especial consideration, in this ad-

dress, was the conduct of the judges. The princes insisted that the greatest injustice had been practised against the protestants : that their claims were rejected even before a hearing ; and that, in the case of the people of Hamburgh, a large fine had been inflicted, because they refused to annul the resolutions by which they had settled the religious affairs of their city.

As little inclined was the assembly to give its assent to the advice of the emperor on the subject of the council. The utmost vacillation, it was said, had been shown by the popes in arranging this matter. Hadrian had spoken in one way, Clement VII. and Paul III. in another ; and, from the known sentiments of the latter, there appeared to be no prospect that the council about to be summoned would obtain the sanction of the protestants.

These were great and important points of difference, and from not one of which the reformers could recede without the sacrifice of their safety, as well as their principles. The decisions of the tribunals might or might not be according to justice ; but their very constitution was calculated to breed suspicion on the one side, and tempt to acts of tyranny on the other. No one had yet been able to decide what were the questions which ought to be regarded as purely religious, when raised in judicial controversy between the two parties. The quarrel respecting temporalities might easily be proved to bear upon a religious right ; and the spiritual claim could hardly be advanced without some seeming pretensions to an unallowed civil privilege. In the same manner, the difficulties involved in the preparations for a general council excited a spirit of doubt that greatly widened the breach between the contending sects. The catholics saw the necessity of employing all the resources, and the most refined maxims, of their church, to lessen the danger expected from the assembling of the council ; while the protestants, aware of their proceedings, regarded them but as a fresh proof of the impossibility of restoring Christianity pure to the world, so long as the power of

the popes remained unchecked. "Nothing," said they, "can be more inconsistent with justice, or the proper character of a general council, than the endeavour of the pontiff to govern its deliberations. He and his predecessors are, in every respect, one of the parties on whose conduct judgment is to be taken. Our theologians have proved them guilty of the most grievous offences against the Gospel; and it has always been the received maxim of the church that the pope has not the power to convoke, much less the right to preside at, a general council. To this is to be added the consideration, that he has summoned it to meet in Italy, whereby he has resisted the positive commands of the emperor, and the other orders of the state; necessarily exciting doubts in the minds of the protestant leaders respecting the prudence, or safety, of attending a meeting where they would be surrounded by enemies, and exposed to the danger of a thousand secret machinations."

The imperial envoy demanded no interval to prepare his reply, but immediately rose to assure the assembly that his master desired nothing so much as the restoration of tranquillity. He then proceeded to defend the principles on which the tribunals had been established, and alluded to the difficulty of separating causes purely religious from those involving temporal interests. With regard to the council, he appealed to the princes in the strongest language of entreaty; implored them not to oppose any obstacle to a measure now so anxiously desired by the emperor; spoke of the alleged vices and errors of the popes as things of which his majesty was not aware; and then stated his conviction, that if such could be proved against them, or that were any attempt made to influence the council to an unjust decision, the emperor would interpose his authority to secure the protestants from harm.

It was evident from the tone of this address, that the reformed party had reached a degree of importance which would enable it to insist on terms, instead of yielding either to power or fraud. So strongly was this felt,

that Paul III. sent another messenger to the elector of Saxony, requesting his co-operation in the assembling of a council. Every attempt, however, at influencing the protestant princes proved vain. They had Luther with them ; and, their minds being strengthened by his powerful representations, as well as by their own careful estimate of the means of defence which they possessed, they listened with equal steadfastness of purpose to the public harangues of Matthias Helde, and the more private persuasions of the legate.

The answer to the ambassador was couched in firm but respectful language. To every argument he had brought forward, some circumstance was adduced as a reply. Conciliatory measures would have been joyfully promoted by the party ; but what room could there be for conciliation, when the proceedings of their opponents only indicated the determination of the Roman court neither to change its own policy, nor allow the principles of toleration to be acted on in any other ? “ We see clearly,” said they, “ that the net is spread for our feet, and we must act with the utmost precaution. But let not this be attributed to any fear respecting the defence of our doctrines : we earnestly desire that they may be submitted to a public examination, and for this purpose beseech the emperor to call a free council in Germany, where the subject may be debated without the unjust interference of the pope or his emissaries.”

A statement of the reasons thus advanced against the proposed council, was drawn up and published by the authority of the princes, as well for an explanation of their conduct to their followers and associates, as for their defence against the accusations of opponents. In all that they said to prove the unjustifiable conduct of the Roman pontiff in this matter, they were closely followed by Henry VIII., who concluded his protestations with the advice that, since there was no hope of a free general council, every prince should take upon himself the duty of reforming the church of his own country.

Paul III. was one of the most cautious of his order,

and, though as anxious as the most ambitious to uphold his authority, did not shrink from the employment of any subterfuges to put off the day when he should be obliged to meet his antagonists in closer conflict. As the period named for the assembling of the council drew nigh, his fear increased ; and, on the plea that the duke of Mantua required a garrison for his city, the meeting was put off till the month of November. The month of November found him as little inclined as before for the free discussion of the abuses of the church. Such, however, was the feeling which prevailed on all sides, that, unwilling as he was to allow of inquiry, he saw himself obliged to divert the attention of the people from the meeting of the council, by pretending to refer the question of reform to some of his principal ministers.

Among the persons chosen for this important office were the cardinals Reginald Pole, Gaspar Contarini, James Sadolet, and John Peter Caraffa. With these were associated several other ecclesiastics of rank ; and the commission given them by the pontiff expressly intimated that they were to make known their sentiments without reserve, and to suggest the best means which might present themselves, on examination, for the reformation of abuse and the removal of grievances.

The paper which the commissioners drew up, in answer to these instructions, contained many valuable hints on the subject of church reform. It warned the pope against continuing to suppose that the power of the papacy was unlimited ; an error, said the writers, which, like the horse of Troy, contained in its womb a countless host of evils. Then, alluding to the mischievous consequences which had followed upon the free use of dispensations, it adds this striking piece of advice, — that if his holiness, as the vicar of Christ, saw fit to grant any indulgence, he should not receive money for the grant. Of the methods to be employed in improving the state of the clergy, the first concerned the admission to holy orders ; and here it was recom-

mended that all candidates should be placed under the examination of persons properly qualified for the task. The next consideration respected the higher classes of ecclesiastics ; and it was strongly urged that dignities ought not to be conferred on men who were distinguished neither for great piety nor remarkable talents ; that hitherto offices of the greatest importance had been bestowed on young men, whose follies had led to many scandals ; and that the utmost care should be taken for the future to avoid both this and the corresponding error of allowing exchanges of benefices for the sake of profit, the promise of livings before the incumbents were dead, and the holding of benefices, the duties of which were incompatible with each other.

Not having spared the pope himself, the cardinals proceeded to notice the abuses which had crept into their own order. The evil of which they chiefly complained was, that bishoprics were given to cardinals ; “and the duties of the prelate and the cardinal,” said they, “are so distinct, that any attempt to perform the one must interfere with the other. It is the office of the cardinals,” continues the memoir, “to remain with you, holy father, and assist in the general government of the church : but the bishop is to remain with his flock. The desire for bishoprics, moreover, has induced the former to frequent the courts of princes ; to become flatterers ; and indulge in many of the vices of the world : whereas they ought to be examples of purity, and to be ever ready to increase, by their presence and their counsels, the dignity of the Roman court. With regard to the bishops and all other pastors, let them labour diligently among their people ; for what spectacle can be more afflicting than that of abandoned churches, and flocks left to perish in the hands of mercenaries ? Let those who are guilty of such offences be severely punished : let them be deprived of their revenues if absent without permission ; and let permission be given for only a brief period, according to the laws of the ancient church, which prohibited a

bishop's being absent from his diocese for more than three weeks."

The following sections of this curious memoir referred to the discipline of schools and monasteries. In the advice respecting the former, the Coloquies of Erasmus were especially mentioned as highly unfit for the purposes for which they were employed in the education of youth. This is the more worthy of remark, as the pontiff, it is said, had proposed about this time to elevate Erasmus to the dignity of a cardinal. In conclusion, the commissioners remark, that the church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all the churches, and that both the church and city ought, therefore, to be an example to all others for holiness and purity of manners. "Instead, however, of this being the case, there are in the church of St. Peter, many ignorant and sordid priests, whose garments are so vile and filthy, that they would scarcely be allowed in the poorest private dwelling. What, again, shall be said of the numerous prostitutes of this city, who, undistinguished from other women, parade the streets, mounted on mules, and followed in open day by the servants of the most eminent cardinals, and others of the same sort? We have seen in no other city so much luxury and intemperance as in this, which ought to be the mirror and the model of the whole earth!" "You have taken the name of Paul," say the commissioners to the pope; "and we hope that, like that apostle, you will have an ardent zeal for the safety of the church. God elected St. Paul to preach the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles: and we trust that, according to his example, God has chosen your holiness to make the name of Jesus Christ, obscured by the nations, shine forth again; to remove the calamities which surround us; to recall the wandering sheep to his fold; and to turn away the anger of God, which our crimes have merited, and which seems ready to overwhelm us."

If Paul III. was sincere in his wish to learn what were the abuses which required immediate reform, he

had here sufficient instruction to convince him of the existence of evils incompatible with the name of a Christian church. There is too much reason to fear that he had no real intention of taking advantage of the counsel given him ; but, whatever were his feelings on the subject, the execution of the proposed reforms would not only have been attended with difficulty, but would have done little towards satisfying those who had demanded the examination of the doctrines and discipline of his church by the light of Scripture. Necessary as were the topics treated of by the commissioners, they were only such as an obvious expediency prompted : they had no connection with any inquiry into the origin of that manifest apostacy from holiness, of which the abuses mentioned formed but the surface. Had the manners of the clergy become corrupt only through the loosening of the cords of discipline,—had the wealth of the church been allowed to run waste, or to flow into channels where it never ought to have been seen, merely by the temporary influence of pride or avarice,—the dangers resulting therefrom might have been made to yield to such a reform as that suggested in the memoir. But here was a church which refused to take Scripture as the sufficient test of truth ; which had for ages encouraged the abominable notion that a soul might be bought off from punishment by money ; and of which the only weapons of defence and correction were, not the spiritual armour of the Holy Ghost and of truth, but the sword and the burning pile : here was a church thus fallen and corrupt, submitted to a reform in which there seemed to be no recollection whatever that God's word and spirit can alone prevent the downfall of any institution in which man is concerned.

The document presented to the pope was, it is said, to have been kept in profound secrecy. But the court of Rome could scarcely expect the silence of all its members on subjects like those alluded to. It has even been surmised that Paul himself favoured the surreptitious appearance of the memoir, that the world might

be amused with the seeming anxiety of himself and his ministers for the commencement of a reform. However this may be, a copy of the document made its way into Germany, where it excited the immediate attention of Luther and the protestants in general. It was republished among them, with notes ; and both arguments and jests were abundantly employed to show the utter inefficiency of the pontiff's measures for any serious purpose. This temporary movement was the only result of the proceedings at Rome. The memoir, as to any measure which it proposed, was speedily forgotten ; and another prorogation of the meeting of the council, till the following year, convinced all parties that the season was not yet come in which Rome would feel itself safe under the hands of reformers.

A. D. 1538
to
1540. Affairs were now in that state in which an important event had to be looked for, till some great effort should be made, on the one side or the other, to bear down the balance in its favour. The protestants assembled from time to time, at Frankfort and other places, and obtained frequent and important accessions to their numbers.* In their debates, a freedom of sentiment prevailed which could only have proceeded from confidence in the justice of their cause, and the means which they possessed for a vigorous defence. Their demands were made with an enlarged view of the duties which they had to fulfil towards the vast body of people now joined with them in the profession of the reformed faith. While few in number, and acting only for themselves, they might barter a privilege for present safety ; or remain content with danger, if they could but enjoy the comfort of inward peace. But they were now struggling for the rights and safety of millions, for the protection of a church in which they might hope generation after generation would listen to the word of God, and enjoy the invaluable blessing of pure devotion.

* Melancthon complained greatly of the little progress made in these meetings, which he says was rather caused by the fault of the persons concerned, than by that of the stars. *Sämtliche Schriften*, t. xviii. p. 395.

True it is, they pressed their claims upon the emperor in seasons when he was least able to spare their assistance, or assail them for their adherence to the doctrines they professed. But who, except the most prejudiced of reasoners, would find fault with the weaker party in a struggle for acknowledged rights, because it proffered its claims when the stronger adversary was most likely to see the value of its friendship, and the danger of its enmity?

Some hope of a pacification appears to have been entertained towards the close of the year 1540. This fleeting prospect of tranquillity had its origin in the mild counsels of the emperor's new chancellor, Granvelle, who, fearing the consequences which might result from the unbending character of his predecessor, resolved on trying the effect of more moderate and amicable measures. To the representations and demands of this minister, the protestants replied by a memoir, in which they entered at full upon their defence, and more particularly as to the purity of their conduct in respect to the management of the ecclesiastical revenues which had fallen into their hands. After having proved that no injustice or cruelty had been used against the inhabitants of the suppressed monasteries, but that they were carefully provided for according to their age and inclinations, the document shows, that what remained of the revenues was employed either to improve the state of the churches badly provided for, to assist the poorer clergy, or furnish young men, intended for the ministry or employment in the state, with the means of pursuing their studies. "And if, after these objects have been secured," says the memoir, "there still exist a surplus from the revenues of the church, we shall not refuse to let it be devoted to such pious and useful purposes as may be pointed out by a general council, or a diet of the empire. For thus it is that the Scriptures, and ancient laws and decrees, teach us to employ the riches of the church: and we desire and intreat that our adversaries would act in like manner in respect to ecclesiastical revenues,

since in most cities there are numerous parishes wholly, or almost wholly, unprovided for ; whilst the bishops, and other dignitaries who do nothing either in the churches or the schools, abound in the possession of wealth. We see, moreover, men of the worst characters enjoying these riches, and every day spending in luxury and debauch that which was originally bestowed for the service of God. Would that the emperor knew what use our adversaries make of their revenues : how they keep back for private purposes the income of churches ; and how, when we demand the restitution of that which belongs to us, offering them in our states the free enjoyment of whatever pertains to them, the judges of the imperial chamber, instead of deciding according to justice, only fan the flame of perpetual discord ! Equality, says the proverb, is the parent and nurse of peace ; and did our enemies regard the happiness of Germany, their conduct would not be what it is."

To the accusation, that they were not sincere in their professions when they spoke of peace, the authors of the memorial replied, that they had, ten years before, given, without artifice or concealment, a full account of their doctrine and discipline ; and offered proofs, which were found sufficient to convince a large number of persons, that their faith and practice were according to Scripture, and the primitive rule of the church. "And no one will deny," continue the apologists, "that many gross errors existed at this time. The doctrine of penitence was cold and obscure. Not a word was said of the grace of Christ, or of the remission of sins. The supper of the Lord was fearfully polluted by the papistical mass ; private masses being altogether a modern invention — the offspring partly of ignorance, and partly of avarice. From the forced celibacy of the priests arose a host of scandals ; while the doctrine of the keys and of the power of the church only served to assist the popes in burdening men with laws and precepts, the spawn of their own ambition. Our opinions on these subjects were made known to the emperor at

Augsburg: they have been since professed and defended by learned men of other nations; and our whole conduct evinces how strongly we desire that the doctrines we avow should be made known to the world, and tried by the test of Scripture. Our adversaries, on the other hand, instead of showing any inclination to meet our offers of conciliation, have treated us with increasing enmity. When a meeting has taken place between us, they have begun by stating, that they would not recede from any of the dogmas they profess, but expected us to forsake the principles which we had embraced, as derived from the Word of God. Thus, while they accuse us of dissembling when we profess to desire peace, they themselves destroy every means for its attainment; the only condition upon which they offer it being this,—that we renounce the truth, and return to the profession of error. But let it be known, that we desire to meet our adversaries in open conference; that we do not shun, but seek, the light; and that we will freely expose to them, whenever they will, both our doctrines and the reasons which have induced us to embrace them. The only condition we require is, that Scripture be taken as the foundation of our reasonings, and that the truth of the Divine Word be the acknowledged standard of purity in the doctrine of the church. It is from Jesus Christ that we have learnt this principle. The revelations of God are the support of our profession, and we cannot, therefore, depart from it. But we speak here of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith: there are points not essential to salvation, as those which relate to ceremonies, the ordination of priests, the property of the church, and marriage; on these we can readily agree to a compromise, provided that freedom is allowed on the more important articles of faith.”*

Passing from this defence of their conduct in respect to religion, the authors of the memorial undertake, in the next place, the confutation of those who accused them of joining the enemies of the emperor, and re-

* Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xiii. , Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. 21.

fusing him assistance in the time of war. "We can prove," say they, "that we have furnished his generals with ammunition and cannoniers ; and that we have enlisted our subjects to render him all the aid in their power. Enticed by terms the most advantageous, we have uniformly resisted the offers of the enemy ; and our trust is, that such representations of our conduct will be made to the emperor as may convince him of our loyalty and zeal."

This address was followed by a correspondence between the emperor, and the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, as the leaders of the protestant party. Little now was said, on either side, on this occasion ; but in the month of June an assembly was convened at Haguenau, and the ambassadors of the protestant princes, with many of their most distinguished theologians, attended the meeting. After a debate lengthened through several sittings, Ferdinand agreed to prorogue the assembly till the 28th of October, when it was summoned to meet at Worms.*

The opening of the conference thus indicated took place in November, when Granvelle addressed the meeting in a speech which abounded in persuasions to peace. Similar language was employed by the papal legate ; and it might have been supposed from these addresses on the part of the catholics, that they were ready with offers and assurances which would have practically promoted the design of a reconciliation. But so far was this from being the case, that no efforts were spared to prevent the fair and free discussion of the points at issue. Above six weeks had been spent in frivolous disputes respecting the proper method of conducting the debate. At length it was begun by Melancthon and Eckius ; the subject chosen for the commencement of the colloquy being that of original sin. Scarcely, however, had these celebrated champions of the two parties exchanged arguments,

* Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. 21. Melancthon was ill at this time, but Luther urged him to exercise a determined courage in opposing the papal messengers.

when letters arrived from the emperor, recalling his minister, and dissolving the assembly, but intimating that the dispute might be resumed in the diet now summoned to meet at Ratisbonne in the month of March.

It was not till the beginning of April that the diet was opened. The presence of the emperor promised A. D.
1541. to give dignity to its proceedings ; and the reformers appeared there fully prepared to support their cause by all the force which belongs to learning and piety. Like other speeches of the same nature, the address of the emperor only alluded superficially to the state of public affairs, and the duty of the assembled powers to agree with him in opinion, and promote, to the best of their ability, the general course of his policy. But, at the conclusion, he recommended that a certain number of Germans should be chosen to deliberate in a friendly conference on the principal points of dispute ; and that when they had come to any resolution on the subject, they should make it known to the legate of the pope, in order to receive his judgment.

To this the heads of the protestant party replied, that they were fully sensible of the anxiety of his majesty for the peace and prosperity of the empire, and that they should endeavour to conform themselves to his wishes ; but that, before they consented to commit the conduct of the dispute to certain members of their body, they desired that it might be made known to them who would be acceptable to his majesty, and that the dispute might be continued from the point where it broke off when they were summoned from Worms to Ratisbonne. The emperor replied, that the choice of the disputants ought to be left entirely to him ; and this demand being conceded by the protestants, his majesty immediately named, on the part of the catholics, Eckius, Pflug, and Gropper ; and on that of the reformers, Melancthon, Pistorius, and Martin Bucer. At the special request of the disputants, two presidents, Granvelle and the count palatine, were appointed, and several persons of distinction to sit as witnesses of the proceedings.

The emperor, it would seem, felt little confidence in the judgment of the theologians, or in their method of pursuing the business which they had in hand. To prevent prolixity and waste of time, he directed a book to be laid before them, which he had received, he said, from some highly learned and pious men, and he wished the disputants to carry on their conference by stating their several opinions on the heads of doctrine set down in this manuscript. Eckius was the foremost to object to such a method of proceeding, but a violent fit of sickness obliged him to retire early from the debate; and his sentiments had, therefore, to be made known through the medium of his colleagues.*

When the volume in question was returned to the emperor, he found the result of the conference to be an agreement on some doctrines of minor importance, the grand points of the dispute remaining untouched. Whether even this was more than he expected, or that he hoped by mildness to lead the way to further concessions, he thanked the protestants for their zeal, and the care manifested in the drawing up of the notes appended to the manuscript. These sentiments he repeated at the general meeting of the diet on the 8th of June; and, placing before the assembled princes the notes of the disputants, both catholic and protestant, he desired them to declare, after due deliberation, their opinion on the subject.

The orders of the emperor were obeyed, but not in the manner which might have been expected. By the great majority of the princely ecclesiastics present, both the book and the notes upon it were treated as unworthy of attention. The other members of the diet did not come to so hasty a conclusion, but insisted that the matter ought now to be referred to the pope's legate, according to the plan originally laid down. To this proposal the emperor assented; and the papal minister, thus endowed with authority to deliver his judgment on the subject, took advantage of his position to declare

* Seckendorf. Sleidan. Luther. Sämtliche Schriften, t. xvii. c. 18.

that the whole must be left to the decision of the pontiff. In his discourses to the emperor, and the various members of the diet, he spoke as if the present disposition of the protestants favoured the hope of their returning to the bosom of the church; and when addressing the bishops, on whom he pressed strongly the necessity of a reform in manners and discipline, he advised them to use every effort to prevent the increase of the protestant heresy; to send emissaries into various parts of the country, who might prevent, by their watchfulness, the efforts of Satan; and to take care that the youth in their dioceses were instructed in the various branches of learning, seeing that the protestants had successfully made use of these means for the purposes of corruption.

Such a tone of expression was ill calculated to soothe, or promote conciliation. The protestants immediately declared that the legate had grievously erred in expressing a hope that they might one day return into the bosom of the church—a church, the errors and the gross vices of which they so entirely despised. They spoke also with indignation of the recommendations which he had given the bishops, and said plainly, that they had expected very different sentiments from a person of his knowledge and experience. The electors having decided that the points of agreement between the two parties ought to be confirmed till such time as a general council was held, they entreated that permission might be given for the teaching of the doctrines which were thus received; and that the decree of the diet of Augsburg might be suppressed, or suspended. In reference to the summoning of the council, they again stated what they had so often before repeated—that they would never agree to leave the ordering of such an assembly in the hands of the pope or his ministers.

After a prolonged debate, the difficulties of which seemed rather to increase than diminish with its length, the emperor addressed the diet, and pointing out the danger with which the country was menaced by the ap-

proaches of the Turk, besought the assembled princes to cease from dispute till the meeting of the general council, which, he was assured by the promises of the sovereign pontiff, would shortly be convened.

Thus terminated the most important meeting which had taken place since that of Augsburg. Its results were as little satisfactory as the expectations respecting them were numerous and anxious. It would have required no great foresight, had the minds of men been calm and clear, to conclude that such would be the case. To suppose that a few theologians, met together as the representatives of two great religious parties, could blend into one the broad wide streams of antagonist opinions, the force of which had been sufficient to shake the steadfastness of kingdoms and empires, was to entertain a notion which might delay excesses, but could never lead to any permanent good.

A. D.
1542. The rapid advance and brilliant triumphs of the Turks left the emperor no time to pursue the plans which he might otherwise have executed for the settling of this great controversy. In a diet held at Spire, in the month of February, the attention of the members was almost entirely confined to the political necessities of the day ; but the legate of the pope, in concluding his address, spoke of the calling of a council as a measure finally determined on. The city of Trent, moreover, was now named for the place of meeting. This announcement, intended as a concession to the wishes of the Germans, was acknowledged by king Ferdinand and the leaders of the catholics with warm expressions of gratitude. The protestants, on the other hand, were as averse to Trent as any other place in Italy for the purposes of a general council, and repeated their former determinations to acknowledge no assembly of the kind convened under the auspices of the Roman pontiff.

Notwithstanding this declaration on the side of the party most deeply interested in the subject, the pope proceeded to publish his manifesto respecting the assembly ; and, having invited the chiefs of Christendom

in general to the meeting, addressed a particular exhortation to the prelates of Germany, for whose sake, and at whose instance, he said, he had involved himself in the weighty cares attending this proceeding. The emperor, on receiving the bull, expressed himself as not less surprised than offended, at finding himself only ranked on an equality with the king of France. Whatever there was of importance in the affair, it appears to have been less regarded by Charles than this, perhaps intended, oversight in the language of the pope. Protestantism, had it been the child of courts or the ally of politicians, might have made good use of the weakness of the sovereign; but it neither aided nor defended itself by the weapons which a more arful policy would frequently have put into its hands. Charles was now at war with France, and the pope undertook the difficult task of acting as a mediator between the two princes. His arguments, however, were unavailing: the emperor answered them all by the simple statement, that it was impossible to maintain peace with a man whom no promise or treaty could keep faithful to his word.

Another diet was held at Nuremberg in the month of February, and the protestants once more availed themselves of its sitting to complain of the oppression which they suffered from the judges of the imperial chamber.* Ferdinand, who presided in the assembly, listened to their representations with attention; but the only answer he could give them was, that the chamber should undergo revision, and that the general council would shortly commence its inquiries. This was so far from satisfying them, that they declared their resolution to retire immediately from the diet, and to take no further part in its proceedings, till justice should be rendered them on a point so essential to their interests and safety. To this resolution they adhered, and the

A. D.
1543.

* Luther, in a letter to Justus Jonas, says, "Universa nobilitas et principes meditantur servitutem Germaniæ, et exhauriunt populos. Soli volunt omnia habere." t. v. p. 543.

decree of the diet lost its authority by their retirement. Another proof was thus given of the increasing power possessed by the party. They had every reason to tremble at the resentment of the emperor, but they could afford to run the hazard of a temporary persecution for the sake of the noble results to be expected from their final success.

In the midst of these proceedings, the political state of the country was as melancholy as that of a nation can be, when torn by internal dissensions, threatened by a bold and triumphant enemy, and ruled by princes whose interests were various, and whose opinions, in proportion as they were sincerely professed, defied the influence of either persuasion, argument, or force. Of the troubles which, springing from the rivalries and discords, first between the emperor and the king of France, and then between the minor potentates, ruined the peace of Germany, our limits will not permit us to speak. We are obliged, therefore, to trace as through a labyrinth the current of events which more closely pertained to the interests of religion. Happily, the circumstances and spirit of the times gave a supreme importance to feelings and motives which regarded the establishment of a pure faith. Though continually modified, and driven out of their straight course, by the occurrences of the period, they were not of a kind to be hidden from observation, and the tide rushed forward, rendered only the more rapid by every opposition to its flow.

A. D. 1544. The beginning of this year was marked by the meeting of a diet at Spire.* Important consequences were looked for from its debates, and the protestants had shortly before held an assembly at Frankfort, in order to be prepared with answers to the questions which it was expected would be put to them on the occasion. The emperor himself opened the business of the diet, and in an address of considerable length,

* "Ora pro ecclesia," says Luther to Spalatin, at this time, "id est, pro nobis. Intrinsici hostes plus nocent, quam externi, ut Judas inter apostolos; sed vincit crucifixus, et perit crucifixor." — BRIEFE, t. v. p. 627.

again assured the numerous princes before him of the increasing anxiety which he felt for the restoration of tranquillity. Of his sincerity, in one sense, few, perhaps, doubted; but what were the offers which he made in return for the sacrifices demanded? The rulers of a number of free states pleaded for the uninterrupted enjoyment of the Word of God, and the practice of rites which they deemed conformable to its principles. In this they were opposed by the tyranny of a corrupt church, the pride of whose chief Charles himself was always ready to resist and humble. When called upon to prove their zeal in the defence of the empire, to increase the burdens of their people, to raise money and recruit armies for the assistance of a sovereign on whose ambition might be charged many of the dangers now incurred, they simply asked, as a corresponding pledge of affection on his part, that he would allow them to pursue a reformation which they deemed essential to the good of their souls and the souls of their people. The only satisfaction they received were reiterated assurances of his desire that peace might be restored; and the only method which he pointed out as likely to secure this end, was their renouncing what they had professed, restoring what they had overthrown as cumbersome, and yielding again to an authority which they had pronounced to be the very offspring of corruption.

One of the first subjects which engaged the attention of this diet was the serious quarrel existing between the protestants and Henry of Brunswick. The emperor had scarcely finished his address, when the elector of Saxony and his associates rose to declare, that Henry had provoked them by his unjust proceedings to take up arms, and that they now regarded him as unworthy of a place in the diet, from which accordingly they desired him to be expelled. This bold procedure on the part of the protestant princes was instantly answered by Henry of Brunswick, who as sternly declared that the elector of Saxony, the landgrave of Hesse, and their associates, ought justly to bear

the penalty with which they were so ready to burden him. In a subsequent session of the diet, the protestants renewed the charge; unfolded at full the reasons which had induced them to enter the territory of Brunswick, and proved that the vices and conduct of the prince had been intolerable, as well to his own, as to the neighbouring states.

The patience with which the emperor listened to these addresses, was a sign that he had no inclination to take part in the quarrel, or compromise his interest with either side. An important concession also was made at this time by the elector of Saxony, who now admitted the claims of Ferdinand to the dignity of king of the Romans. A still further proof of the loyal wishes of the protestants was afforded at the termination of the diet, when they voted a liberal supply of men and money to carry on the war, as well against France as against the Turk. In return for this expression of amity, the emperor repeated his promises to further, as far as lay in his power, some useful and pious plan of reformation; and, what was of more practical importance, suspended the edict of Augsburg, and declared that judges of the imperial chamber might, after a certain time, be chosen from among protestants as well as catholics, without regard to their religious peculiarities.

This was a step of the utmost consequence in the progress of religious liberty. It not only offered convincing evidence that the emperor viewed the protestants with far more respect than formerly, but actually brought within their reach the apparent means of an acknowledged legitimate defence against the further oppressions of their enemies. The vast importance of the measure in their favour was instantly seen by the opposite party; who protested that the decree would have met with their determined resistance but for their loyalty to the emperor, to whom they would not pretend to prescribe laws. There appears, however, reason to doubt whether their conduct would have been thus moderate, had not the archbishop of Cologne and the bishop of Mun-

ster encouraged the claims of the protestants. Among those who were far from viewing the reformation with pleasure, but also gave their votes on this side, that they might act consistently with their often avowed determination to yield in all things to the head of the empire, were the duke of Cleves and the prince of Baden. The elector of Brandebourg, and the elector Palatine, added all the weight of their influence on the same side ; and by these means the various disputes with which the business of the diet was commenced were for a time silenced, and a better prospect of tranquillity offered than had been presented from the beginning of the reformation."

Such was the favourable aspect of affairs immediately after the termination of the diet ; but they were not permitted to remain long in this state. The pope read the decree which had been passed with mingled anger and apprehension. He clearly saw in its provisions that tendency to forbearance and liberality which it was his chief care to resist. Any sacrifices made to the wishes of the protestants at such a time was likely to prove doubly injurious to the cause of the papacy. The emperor held the balance in his own hands ; and his determination, it was instinctively apprehended, would decide the controversy. " Shall I any longer conceal," said the pontiff, " the fears which agitate my breast ? Eli, who suffered so miserably of old for his indulgence to his children, shall be my example. I will speak then ; for the decree which has been passed endangers both the safety of the church and your own soul. Cease not to follow the example of your ancestors. Swerve not from their obedience to the church and to its ordinances ; but fulfil its injunctions, one of the first of which is, to refer whatever regards religion to its control. In contradiction to this, however, you have given your sanction to a decree which speaks of a general or national council, without seeming to recollect the power which alone has authority to assemble councils or decide on the concerns of the church. Nor is this all," continued the pontiff ; " you have permitted even the supporters of

heresy to pass judgment on religious matters, to decide questions respecting the rights and property of the church, and have also reinstated those who had been justly degraded for their offences against its peace. We are willing to attribute this rather to the advice of others than to your own feelings ; but remember, that evil communications corrupt good manners, and that there is no proceeding, however dangerous and evil, which may not, by the cunning craftiness of the wicked, be made to bear the appearance of piety. Scripture affords sufficient examples of the anger of God against those who invade the duty of the high priest. The father of a family distributes the offices of the household as he sees fit, and will not suffer one member thereof to interfere with the charge of another. And the church is the house of God ; and it would ill become the inferior ministers to assume the functions of the more exalted. The priests are entrusted with the government of the church, and let him who ventures to interfere with their duties take heed, lest he suffer not the fate of him who, daring to touch the sacred ark, about which the Levites only were allowed to minister, was struck dead for his temerity."

After having cited many other examples of the punishment which had fallen on profaners of the sanctuary, the pontiff continues to say, that the apology which the emperor offered respecting the limited time during which the decree would be in operation, affected not the question ; and that if the proceeding were even pious in itself, it would be wicked, because undertaken by one who had no right to interfere. " It is to God that priests must give account, and with that we must be satisfied. He has proved his love for princes who have honoured and obeyed the Roman church, by crowning them with the fulness of success. Thus was it in the case of Constantine the Great, in that of Theodosius, and the illustrious Charlemagne ; while equally signal have been the misfortunes of those who, either in the infancy or the maturity of the church, have resisted its rulers and

its ordinances." To this the pontiff added, that he was willing to accept the offices of Charles as a coadjutor, but not as a director ; that he entertained the warmest anxiety for the assembling of a council, as the promised means of healing the present disorders ; that he trusted the emperor would act towards him as his father, and, prohibiting the mention of religion at the diets, would remit, in all cases, the settling of its affairs to him. Lastly, that he retracted whatever he had done out of favour or indulgence towards the protestants, whom he designated as rebels, and enemies to the Romish church, a measure, he said, which the necessities of the times compelled him to adopt, seeing that mildness only tempted the schismatics to further invasions of just and holy things, and would, in the end, oblige him to adopt a line of conduct more severe than was accordant with his character and wishes. " Let your majesty then consider," says he, " whether you think it is better for you to assist in restoring tranquillity to the church, or to take the part of those whose only wish is to destroy it."*

It was in this manner that the pope of Rome could address a sovereign who had done nothing more than engage that the people who owned his sway should enjoy the fair administration of the laws. Even this had not been granted till after many years of suffering on the part of the complainants had given proof of injustice which no prince could tolerate. The interference in religious affairs, of which the pontiff spoke, had not the remotest resemblance to those sacrilegious acts to which they were compared. It was no invasion of the mysteries of the sanctuary, or the office of the priest. The order of society seemed threatened by the disputes of rival sects ; and he who had the direction of whatever pertained to the preservation of that order, but acted according to the first principles of duty, when he promoted and sanctioned the solemn examination of their controversy, according to the example of primitive times.

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

It was said by the pontiff, that he alone had a right to decide questions pertaining to religion ; but this was one of the points at issue ; and, whether the principle could be supported or not, the importance attached to its assertion or denial made it a matter for open debate, and rendered it necessary that the assembly in which it was considered should be free from the influence of the pontiff's authority. Nor was this the only matter in which independence of his control would be essential to the fair decisions of a council. He stood charged with supporting a system favourable to pride, licentiousness, and error : his accusers were men of acknowledged piety, and equally unquestioned learning. Tens of thousands of followers now bore testimony to the force of their arguments and the purity of their conduct ; and came forward to support the system they had adopted with reasons which lost nothing of their worth, because embodied in the simple language of Scripture. Were their questions now, their demands for reform, to remain for ever unanswered ? or were they to be satisfied with the answer given them in an assembly convened, ruled, dictated to by him who had so vast an interest in the decision ? If neither of these was to be the case, and if the peace of the church really required an open and general consideration of the dispute, the interference of the temporal ruler to see justice done between the disputants, was accordant with every principle of his high and solemn functions. Violence threatened the sanctuary ; and he came, not to offer incense on the altar, but to save it from being overthrown.

A. D. The diet re-assembled early this year at Worms ; and
 1545. deep and earnest were the arguments of the protestant deputies, urging the fulfilment of the promises made at the last meeting. In the month of May, the emperor and the cardinal Farnese arrived at Worms ; and another specimen was given of the struggle carried on by the sovereign, anxious to conciliate the protestants, and the court of Rome, each watching every look and movement which could indicate his views or intentions. Peace

had been made with France, and the present object of the pope was to unite its sovereign and the emperor in one mighty league against the reformers. The cessation of hostilities greatly aided his projects in this respect. Charles appears to have been on the point of taking some step, though timidly, in favour of protestantism, but to have drawn back the moment he saw himself in close alliance again with the two grand props of the catholic interests. His address to the diet was courteous, but temporising. He spoke of taking measures to secure a reform in the church,—of rendering justice to those who complained of wrong; but he summed up all with reminding the assembly that a general council would soon meet, and that it would be advisable to stop all further debate on the subject till such time as it might be considered in the proposed synod.

Accustomed to the ways of politicians, and as well aware of the objects aimed at in the plans of the emperor as that prince himself, the protestants immediately reminded him of his promises at the last diet, and especially of his assurance that he would provide for the restoration of peace, without appending to that promise any mention of a general council. They besought him not to withdraw from this course of action, but to confirm whatever had been decided on at Spire, which would lay the basis of a permanent peace, and secure the affectionate co-operation of their party in carrying on the war against the Turk, so anxiously viewed by the emperor and his brother Ferdinand. “But if this be denied us,” said they, “with what face can we ask the contributions of our subjects? The peace of Germany must be secured before success can be hoped for in this war. We march against the Turks for the preservation of the state, of our fortunes, and of our religion; but what would the people gain, if, while they went forth to repel an enemy who attacked them on the one side, they were menaced and ruined by a foe equally to be feared on the other?” To this they added, that fresh sureties ought to be given them, that the general council

should not interfere with the arrangements which had been made for their security, a demand which the experience of past times, as well as the present aspect of affairs, most fully justified.

But so far was the emperor from acting according to the spirit of the previous diet, that he plainly declared it would be impossible for him to free the protestants from the decrees of the council, to which he said they must submit in common with the rest of the world. A long argument followed this announcement, and it was soon perceived, to the deep regret of every lover of peace, that the hopes which had been entertained were as fallacious as the policy of Rome was crafty and intolerant. Still the emperor could not persuade himself to throw off the mask which he had assumed, or rather, perhaps, to give up the wish which, with better feelings, he cherished, of inducing a compromise between the hostile churches. This was manifested in the suggestions with which he closed the diet. The principal points of dispute were again referred to a select number of learned men. Fresh promises of a reform of the chamber were given; but the vexed and irritated sovereign had the mortification to find, that his catholic supporters would not consent to the article which proposed a continuation of the conferences. With as little success he endeavoured to soothe the mind of the duke of Brunswick. His wishes, and in some degree his authority, were doggedly resisted; and the affairs, both of religion and of the state, seemed wholly at a stand. The landgrave of Hesse, in the mean time, took upon himself to punish the resistance of Henry of Brunswick; and a short but fierce conflict gave both the prince and his eldest son into his hands. Nothing could better prove the distracted state of Germany than this affair, from beginning to end. A petty civil war, fomented by the basest treachery on the one side, and a fierce spirit of retaliation on the other, raged at a time when there was the greatest necessity for tranquillity; and when the pope, the emperor, and

almost every prince in Christendom, felt it to be their interest to call for union. Power, persuasion, patriotism, and principle, were equally inefficient or inactive; and it needed but a coalition between the one or the other party with the restless mass of the population, to overturn the whole system of European policy.

A spirit of distrust had, not without reason, taken possession of the protestants. They had found themselves baffled and disappointed in every measure, whereby they hoped to secure their religious freedom, and the promotion of that good cause, which, to them who were sincere in their zeal, was of infinitely greater concern than the acquisition of personal liberty, or the safety of their highest dignities. The doubts and apprehensions thus conceived, were further increased by the intelligence conveyed to them from various quarters, and especially from the English court, where their ambassador was informed that the emperor had certainly determined upon commencing war against their party, and effecting by force what he had vainly sought by milder measures. A further reason for this feeling was given by the preparations for the council, which still continued to be carried on with a vigour and a secrecy that afforded ample proof of the new views taken of the proposed assembly.* Only a few years had passed since the prospect of a general council appeared to be contemplated by the Roman court with discontent and dread: now it was viewed as promising safety from the invasions of reform. Such a striking contrast in the disposition of the catholic party must have greatly tended to convince the protestants, that they had only acted according to sound policy when they first declared their resolution to take no share in an assembly subject to the domination of the pope.

While the main course of events thus demonstrated the energy of the two antagonist spirits, other circum-

* The more moderate of the catholic writers all agree in pointing out the low policy of the pontifical court in respect to the council, and by this prove in fact most of the accusations brought against it by protestants. See Fleury. Fra Paoli, Hist. Conc. Trid.

stances occurred which equally indicated the struggle that was taking place in the minds of many excellent men, prevented by their situation from acting with freedom, or unable to determine the exact line of conduct which it was their duty to pursue. The archbishop of Cologne afforded an example of this class of men. A virtuous and intelligent prelate, he had long contemplated with sorrow the corruptions which oppressed the cause of the gospel ; but, though anxious to reform these abuses, he saw that such an undertaking would be attended with difficulties under which he might sink defeated and ruined. If he paused then, before putting his hand resolutely to the work, little surprise will be felt by those who have a due regard for the infirmities of human nature. The arrival of Bucer in his diocese gave him the opportunity of seeking the advice of that learned and temperate reformer. Melancthon and Pistorius were also sent for to co-operate in the undertaking ; and a series of articles having been drawn up, the archbishop called a meeting of his clergy, that they might put in execution such parts of the plan as seemed calculated to promote the interests of piety. Instead, however, of seconding the views of their bishop, they began an opposition which in a short time placed them in the position of declared enemies to their spiritual head. The council, said they, will shortly be held ; let projects of reform be deferred till the commencement of its sittings ; let the new preachers be dismissed, and all things restored to their former footing. To enforce their remonstrances, they appealed to the power of the pope, and the virtue of submission ; and in the end, threatened to call in the aid of supreme authority, if any further attempt was made to establish the intended changes.*

The archbishop replied to these appeals with equal good temper and firmness. Bucer and Luther, he remarked, were not his private advisers, nor ought the reforms which he meditated, to be attributed to their

* Seckendorf. Sleidan. On the other side, Fleury.

counsels. He knew and admired them as the teachers of apostolic truth, and of a system of doctrines which deserved universal acceptance. Such being the case, he was resolved, he added, to complete the reform which appeared so necessary to the happiness of his people, and the general safety of the church. His cause thus became the cause of protestantism itself, and his defence was an object of especial care to its advocates throughout Germany.

Three of the most celebrated men of the age died during the progress of these events. George of Saxony, Albert of Mayence, and the erudite Erasmus. The first of these distinguished characters assumed a station among the enemies of protestantism, which exposed him to the most violent hatred and reprobation of its supporters. But he does not appear to have resorted to those arts which sometimes render even the spirit of persecution baser than a blind zeal and cruelty can make it. He was a stern, persevering, and angry opponent of reform ; and his power was exerted to the utmost whenever it could be brought to act against the walls of the rising temple ; but he seems to have done nothing for which he had not first the warranty of his own convictions ; and, however venomous a man may be, or however opposed to our own views of justice and charity, we ought not to place him in the ranks of the reprobate, unless he can be proved guilty of some known offence against the law of his own inward consciousness, or the employment of weapons not merely sharpened by religious fanaticism, but dipped in the poison of fraud, hypocrisy, and malice. His unshaken zeal for the Roman church was strongly manifested at the period when all opinions are put to the most powerful of tests. When approaching his end, he bequeathed his estates to his brother Henry, and the two sons of that prince, but with the proviso, that if they did not remain obedient to the catholic faith, the whole of his dominions were to be resigned to the emperor and king Ferdinand, till some one of his family, by fidelity to the church, should be

found worthy of the bequest. His death appearing inevitable, messengers were sent to Henry, and the purport of the will being made known, the prince was requested to declare his assent to the conditions on which he received the states. "Return with us," said the deputies, "and enter at once upon the possession of the treasures amassed by the prudence of your predecessor; and of that noble palace, which has been enriched by his taste and munificence with more than princely splendour." To this address, prince Henry replied in the language of a man to whom the world had ceased to be of equal value with the gospel. "Your language," said he, "reminds me of the promise which the devil made to Jesus Christ, if he would fall down and worship him. No! you solicit me in vain. I cannot resign the possession of truth and religion for that of any temporal advantage." But this determination of the prince did not prevent his endeavouring to establish his claim to the sovereignty, which he regarded as his undoubted right. The death of the duke was no sooner announced than he made himself master of Dresden and several other towns of the vacant dominions. Important preparations for the introduction of protestantism had been in progress even during the life of George, who could neither by force nor exhortation keep down the ardour of those who regarded it as the means of life. Luther now hastened to Leipzig, as a sphere requiring the most energetic exercise of his powers. The protestants of that city and the surrounding territory had been obliged to support their faith and hope on the scanty food which could be looked for under the eye of a jealous and persecuting prince. It was but just that they should now be replenished with a fuller supply of spiritual nourishment, while it was equally expedient that those who had hitherto been kept back from receiving or openly professing the truth by the fear of persecution, should be brought to acknowledge it by the clearest demonstration of its beauty and efficacy.

Albert of Mentz exhibited in the early part of his

career the eager ambition of a churchman, accustomed to look to the revenues of the church as an inexhaustible source of riches. He shared with Leo X. in the first profits of the sale of indulgences, and was immediately after made to feel that the insulted reason of mankind had resolved to break the yoke of its bondage. His life was passed in sustaining that mixed religious and political controversy which he had thus contributed to awaken. He shrank from none of the measures which it was deemed expedient, on the side of the Roman court, to pursue; but his character appears to have undergone some change during the progress of events; and he was far from being one of those who opposed the reformation with the most virulent or angry spirit.

The death of Erasmus took place in 1536, at Basle, where he had found an honourable retreat from the follies of the world, and the turbulent disputes of schoolmen and polemics. His last days were spent in the revision of his voluminous writings, and in performing the not burdensome duties of rector of the university, to the bosom of which he had retired. Whatever unfavourable impressions may be felt when we see him courting the patronage of powerful monarchs, or bending his noble genius to the will of the corrupt rulers of a corrupt church, we cannot fail being filled with admiration at those wonderful displays of learning, eloquence, and wit, which, often mixed with the yet more admirable evidences of profound wisdom, broke down so many of the defences of darkness, and roused so many dormant minds to the exercise of thought and inquiry. Though this great man, moreover, has none of the claims to veneration which belong to the heroism and self-offerings of Luther, he is not without those to respect which pertain to the few who have roused the enmity of the world and the powerful by the freedom of their expostulations. Flattered and caressed by kings and pontiffs, Erasmus had many enemies among the clergy, and especially among the

divines of the old universities. By them he was hated for his satires, suspected because of his learning, and dreaded for the ability with which he could apply it to purposes hitherto forbidden. While Luther had the whole body of the Roman church for his adversary, Erasmus had to encounter the small inner circle of the schools; and as every doubt was regarded as a heresy, and every attempt at reform as rebellion, he frequently seemed to stand on the edge of a precipice, from being plunged down which he was only saved by the dread with which the party contemplated the loss of the only man who could be brought into the field against Luther with any chance of success. It is not a little curious to see how well he managed his affairs, so as to inspire the court of Rome with the continual dread of losing his services, while it trembled at the consequences of his freedom of opinion. Conscious of its weakness, it dared not venture on the attempt to correct the petulancy of this its powerful son; and Erasmus enjoyed a secret triumph, which to a certain kind of ambition is far more satisfactory than its open and ordinary conquests in the world. It was only Luther, on the one side, and the divines of Paris on the other, who could inspire him with fear. The former employed weapons which shivered to pieces the two-edged sword of wit and learning, and against which the shield of subtle argument afforded little protection: the latter could pass decrees, which, coming immediately from recognised seats of learning, possessed an authority to which many would yield their opinions, who would have despised, in their hearts, the arbitrary commands of the ecclesiastical power. At the instance of Natalis Bedda, a doctor of the Sorbonne, the doctrine of Erasmus was pronounced by the faculty of divines to be founded in error and schism, and as injurious to morality as it was contrary to the maxims of sound theology. To this sweeping accusation, Erasmus returned an answer, the prudence and moderation of which are as remarkable as the vigour of the remarks:—"I am very far," says he, "from wishing to follow

the example of those obstinate people, who are not content with defending their opinions against objections, but, being determined not to acknowledge themselves fallible, run into more dangerous errors than any they may have before advanced. As for me, I have not forgotten in my answer the respect due to the authority of the divines; and am always ready to acknowledge the faults into which I may have fallen through negligence or ignorance. If it appear, on the other hand, that any ambiguity of style has led the censors to mistake my meaning, I shall readily explain what is obscure, and declare my thoughts with more care and explicitness. When I meet with statements that are in themselves false, or with things attributed to me which belong to others, I shall not charge the faculty with the unfairness in which these have originated, but ascribe them to the negligence or dishonesty of those by whom my sentiments have been represented to that body; for, being always employed on important matters, it cannot have minutely examined my writings, but must have passed its opinions on the propositions placed before it, as supposed to be correctly gathered from my works. May the faculty ever be preserved from any accusation which might injure its dignity or authority! for I am persuaded that the interests of religion are promoted, while the world retains its veneration for the divines of Paris, and receives their decisions as oracles.”*

Thus modestly could this great man write, when about to defend himself from the censures which seemed so seriously to injure his reputation, and even to place him in the ranks of those whom the church to which he adhered regarded as its most hateful enemies. In endeavouring to prove that it was not for any real offence against orthodox opinion that the divines of Paris assailed him with so much anger, he mentions as reasons for their opposition, first, that he spoke out too freely; secondly, that he refused to make use of scholastic terms; thirdly, that he had rejected the modern

* Du Pin, b. iii. art. Eras.

schoolmen to follow the purer style and doctrine of the primitive divines ; and, fourthly, that he had adorned his pages with the tropes and figures employed by those ancient writers, and the inspired authors of Scripture.

Erasmus had other enemies to encounter. In England he was violently assailed by Edward Lee, who pretended to discover the seeds of heresy in every part of his notes on the New Testament. At the university of Louvain, besides a host of inferior antagonists, he had to encounter the especial enmity of the professor of divinity, Jacob Latomus ; while in Spain, the scholars of the university of Alcala were led on to the encounter by Lopez Stunica, a doctor of divinity, and a man of some learning and acuteness, but little fitted, it would appear, by candour or gentleness to fathom the meaning of the gospel. It is related of this man, that having written his observations on the notes published by Erasmus, he presented the MS. to cardinal Ximenes, who, with equal good sense and liberality, advised him to send it as it was to Erasmus, and to await his answer before proceeding to publication. So far, however, was Stunica from sharing in this good temper, that seeing some one in the company of the cardinal studying the annotations alluded to, he loudly reproved him for reading a book which contained such a mixture of mistakes and trifles ; but the cardinal again repressed his zeal. " Would to heaven," he said, " that all authors had written to as good purpose as the author of this book. Give us something better, or do not find fault with the productions of others." The court of Rome was as little inclined to favour this attack on Erasmus as the Spanish minister. Leo X. and his cardinals even prohibited Stunica from publishing his remarks ; and we have thus a very curious instance of the different light in which the opinions and writings of Erasmus were viewed by the advocates of the same church, the champions of the same system of error and misrule. Nothing can better prove the vigour of his mind, and the admirable fitness of his style to give

force to the expression of his feelings. A tenth part of what Erasmus said, said in another way, would have been sufficient to secure his condemnation as a heretic, ripe for the stake.

Luther lost none of his energy by the increase of years and toil. Of him, in common with other men of a similar character, it might, perhaps, be truly said, that new light was let in "by chinks which time had made!" His bodily health suffered more and more from those chronic attacks to which he had been long subject; but this hindered not his labours. He wrote with the same vigour as in the earliest period of his career; but while he breathed forth the earnest convictions of a mature spirit — while he hurled defiance at the fortresses of darkness and error, he frequently spoke as a man who felt that the whole of his extraordinary career would shortly be judged, not by his own or any other man's judgment, but by His unto whom all hearts are known, and from whom no secrets are hid.

The chief object of the reformer's care at this time, was the settlement of the discipline and other concerns of the new protestant church. It is easy to conceive how much anxiety this occupation must have caused him. Considerations involving the highest questions of Christian duty arose every step he took. He could borrow but few ideas from the constitution of the Roman church. It had been supported for centuries by the mightiest efforts of power, was adorned with the spoils of ages and nations, and had been able to employ in its service the finest and the subtlest minds that ever engaged in the task of representing things spiritual by outward signs and images. The different orders of its clergy were linked together by ties which converted them into a well disciplined army. Their means of provision were full and ample; brilliant rewards tempted the eloquent and accomplished to the best exercise of their talents: the ambitious had examples to lure them on which might encourage the most desponding, and

satisfy the most sanguine ; while the influence which they possessed among the people, their experience in all the methods whereby large masses of mankind are held in awe, enabled them to carry forward with comparative ease whatever projects seemed best calculated either to increase their usefulness, or subdue the obstacles which opposed the enlargement of the church.

How different were the circumstances under which the protestant ministers had to perform the duties and pursue the great ends of churchmanship. Their revenue was small and precarious ; they were not yet cemented together in the bonds of a well ascertained fellowship ; and whatever rules of discipline they had to institute must depend for their efficacy, not on the feelings of awe or long-existing sentiments of veneration, so readily excited, but on the calm good sense of their followers, — on the intelligence which they themselves had to impart by conscientious and assiduous labour.

But if the practical difficulties were great, those which stood in the way of a just and satisfactory theory of church government were still greater. Luther saw clearly that the church, in the highest view of its nature, must have a unity like the unity of the Spirit which gives it life : that to deny this, would be to take away one of the most important deductions which Christians draw from the character of their Lord ; and that, the church lost sight of, there would be no support for ministerial authority, or the exercise of any of those branches of wholesome discipline, so essential to the interests of piety.

With these convictions to act as a counterpoise to the stimulants of reformation, Luther dived into the depths of his capacious mind, learned and spiritual as it was, to see on what foundation his new system could be established. The conclusion to which he eventually came rested on the distinction between a visible and the true universal and invisible church. This latter he believed to have resisted the influence of all outward and

antagonist circumstances; and to have retained its strength and unity when its members were dispersed through the most remote countries of the world, and were not discovered to each other by any visible remark or open profession of belief. When the Roman church* apostatised from the pure faith of the gospel, it lost its claim to be considered as a part of the general communion; and Christians had this only to comfort them, namely, that the true church, being an object of belief, and not of sight, still retained its own peculiar privileges and glory.

It was Luther's wish to establish a church which should answer in its outward constitution and principles to these views of the universal church, and fulfil the designs of the apostles in the simple plan which they seemed to sketch out by their ministerial ordinances. The circumstances of the age, and the peculiar character of the reformation, rendered the temporal power an important element in these changes. It was under the eye of his sovereign that Luther carried on his proceedings. The same was the case with the reformers in other countries; and thus the ruler of a people became, by general consent, the head and shield, as to temporal things, of the new church. Luther, with his accustomed acuteness of observation, and with a rectitude of purpose which has preserved him from any of the baser accusations of selfishness, immediately discovered the danger to be apprehended from such a constitution of the church. He foresaw that the revenues which were to supply a provision for its ministers, and the other necessary demands of a religious establishment, must arise from the application of sources now in the hands of the catholics; and that in the transfer, the property which had been solemnly consecrated to the service of God, and the grandest objects of charity,

* Longissime, latissime, profundissime distinguo inter Romanam ecclesiam et Romanam curiam. Illam scis purissimum esse thalamum Christi, matrem ecclesiarum, dominam mundi, sed spiritu, id est, vitiorum, non rerum mundi, sponsam Christi, filiam Dei, terrorem inferni, victoriam carnis; et quid dicam? cujus sunt omnia? Such was Luther's description of the Roman church at the beginning of his career.

would be exposed to needy and rapacious spoliators. Anxious to prevent the evils thus apprehended, he spoke earnestly and frequently on the subject to those who had any influence or authority. It was a vital principle in his polity, that nothing which had been once given to God could be safely withdrawn, or given back to the world ; and, consequently, that neither the clergy nor the prince were authorised to attempt any alienation of ecclesiastical revenues. Whatever, therefore, fell into the hands of the Saxon reformers was diligently employed in the direct line of religious service ; and they set an example of moderation and disinterestedness in respect to the wealth of the church which it would have been well to have seen followed in other lands where protestantism set up its banners.

The election and consecration of Amsdorf* to the bishopric of Nuremberg, in 1542, was the first decisive step taken towards the erection of an independent church. From this beginning, the progress towards the only end which could be contemplated was sure and rapid ; but the friends of the reformation can scarcely fail to wish that the proceedings of Luther and the elector had been of a less doubtful character than in this instance they must be allowed to have been. Julius von Pflug was the bishop appointed in the usual way by the chapter ; and it would be difficult to defend the violence of his deposition, without also arguing for a system subversive of the most wholesome lessons of experience. But, whatever may be thought of the conduct of Luther, or the elector, in reference to the individual, the proceeding was one of such importance, that if the reformation could be comprehended in some few points of a theory, it is in this we should see one of the boldest developements of its spirit, as the antagonist of principles which, older than the most conspicuous corruptions of popery, were ready, with their energy and their poison, to give a destructive

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

force to ambition whenever it should appear. The advocates of the new system had contemplated with the intensest awe and delight the purity of apostolic times. Their hearts burned to restore the blessings of those times to their fellow men ; and in the grandeur of this design, and the intrepidity of their benevolence, they lost sight, it may be allowed, of considerations which ought not to have been neglected. Gigantic abuses lay in their way to the temple, as it rose before them in the vision of pristine holiness. They beat them aside in their triumphant march ; and when they stood, in hope and faith, on its threshold, they had no thought but the one inspiring notion that they were about to start afresh on the path of life and wisdom, and that neither rules, precepts, nor institutions could or ought to stand in the way of those who thus began, where the apostles began, with fellowship in Christ.

It cannot but be matter of congratulation to the members of the church of England, that in this country the work of reformation was carried on without violence being done to those principles which give an apostolic authority to its ministers. The king had no need of prelates whose episcopal ordination or appointment might be called in question. Bishops, in the full possession of their sacred authority, and venerable for the purity of their personal character, for their extensive learning and noble genius, authorised and promoted the reform of the national church, which throughout preserved its integrity, and the consistency as well of its polity as of the fundamental doctrines of a pure faith. From the prelates thus opening the channels of protestantism, arose an authorised and properly consecrated clergy, who wanted nothing to their office which the power or the call of the church could give. If they failed, either at this or any subsequent period, in the befitting virtues of their station, the guilt, the deficiency, was personal, not ecclesiastical. As a clergy, they were endowed with the best privileges which the public teachers of religion could receive in the

way of ancient rule and example. A dispensation of the gospel had been committed to them, and it thenceforward became their duty to preach the word, and administer the sacraments, not as novices, but as those whose right to these functions was based on the surest foundation,—primitive example, and primitive doctrine.

CHAPTER XVI.

COUNCILS. — OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT. — DIFFICULTIES OF THE LEGATES. — DEBATES ON DOCTRINE AND REFORMATION. — COLLOQUY OF RATISBONNE. — LUTHER. — HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

BOTH the plan and spirit of the Christian church favour the principle which first led to the calling of general councils. The unity of the spirit, the communion of saints, the very notion of a universal church, the members of which are bound together by an indissoluble brotherhood, teaches the believer that the strength of the sacred institution lies not in any one of its sections, but is diffused, with the gift of life, through its whole extent. To its acknowledged representatives, therefore, brought together in the name of its adored Founder, the great body of Christians may well look, in seasons of difficulty or distress, for the determination of their doubts. It is in the assembly of the elders of the church that the fulfilment of the blessings upon united prayers and deliberations may be most confidently expected. The promise given was doubtlessly intended as an incitement to the cultivation of peace and mutual love ; and, where these form the basis of inquiry, we humbly trust that an answer will always be accorded from on high. But, to render this expectation reasonable, the conditions must be fulfilled on which alone the tenour of Scripture encourages us to look for guidance. If the question agitated concerns only a national church, or a province of that church, a union of its principal members in council will realise the rule laid down ; but if the subject be one which has relation to the general interests of Christendom, and the purity of the common faith, then

nothing less than a free and well-ordered assembly of the representatives of the Christian church, in its widest sense, can be regarded as possessing the authority derived from the promised presence of the blessed Spirit. How far the principles on which the Council of Trent was convened deviated from these rules will be understood from the preceding narrative.

A. D.
1546. Notwithstanding the preparations which had been made during the preceding year, and the formal opening of the council, it was not till the 7th of January, 1546, that this celebrated assembly held its first effective sitting. On the morning of that day, the numerous dignified ecclesiastics, ambassadors, and other personages called to the council, proceeded to the cathedral, accompanied by a countless host of people, not less excited by the solemnity of the spectacle, than by the importance of the subjects about to be debated. High mass having been performed, with all the pomp and grandeur of which the solemn ceremony was susceptible, the pontifical legates commenced the business of the meeting, by reading an instrument in which were set forth the main objects for which, it was said, the council had been summoned. These were, the extirpation of heresies, the re-establishment of discipline, and the restoration of peace. So far was any attempt from being made to apologise for the state of the Romish clergy, in this address, that its authors declared that to the negligence and vices of the ecclesiastical order might be attributed all the misfortunes at present existing. Hence, it was said, sprung the dangers to be apprehended from the heresies and schisms which every where prevailed. They had neglected to till the field; they had sown no good seed themselves, and the enemy had covered it with tares while they slept. "Let every one then examine himself," continued the legates. "Let him consult his conscience, and see whether or not he have done his duty to the church. War is raging around: the scourge of God is sent on account of the sins of his people. They have opened the road to this and all other

evils by their avarice and ambition. Could they claim for themselves the honour of suffering in the cause of justice, they might be esteemed happy ; but they have no right to this consolation, for their conduct deserved a punishment much heavier than that inflicted. It ought to be esteemed a mercy that God has allowed this council to be held ; affording thereby the hope that the church, recovering its former strength and purity, may be like Jerusalem after the return of its people from their captivity in Babylon. There were enemies and scoffers in those days, who would have hindered the rebuilding of the walls of the holy city ; and in the same manner may the present design be opposed ; but the work must be done, and the commands of Jesus Christ obeyed, whatever difficulties lie in the way of their execution."

Then follows the important advice, that, as the members of the council were assembled in the character of judges, they should perform their duties with the most careful attention to the proper virtues of their office ; that they should yield neither to hatred nor to friendship ; regard not the persons of men, nor their own interests, but act with a single eye to the glory of God. "For He and his angels are present," said the legates, "and not a thought of our hearts is hidden from his sight. Let the bishops who are here fulfil the orders with which they are entrusted by the kings and princes from whom they come ; but, above all, let them remember that they are standing before God ; that they are bound to act independently of prejudice or favour ; and that it is the duty of every one to bear in mind that he is sent to concert measures for the re-establishment of peace, and, therefore, must avoid whatever savours of strife or faction."

The sentiments thus expressed were such as became men occupied in so solemn a work as that contemplated by a general assembly of the church of Christ. It needed only a strict and spiritual observance of the rules propounded to give efficacy to the proceedings of the meeting, and to render it replete with blessings to uni-

versal Christendom. The address of the legates was, in many respects, a sufficient justification of almost all that had been said and done by Luther and the other reformers. An acknowledgment was made that the clergy had left the Lord's vineyard exposed to the ravages of Satan ; that they had corrupted themselves with the worst excesses of avarice and ambition ; and that, in consequence of their faithlessness in the performance of their work, the laity were sunk in immorality and ignorance. That such a state of things could not have arisen from the mere want of discipline, must have been plain to most minds, sufficiently bold to look far enough to discover the truth. The relaxing of discipline will always be productive of many and great injuries ; because, in every period of the church, there will be found men who can only be governed by the stern hand of a watchful authority. But, where the mass is corrupted ; where holiness lies dishonoured beneath the altar, and the contemplation of Christ upon the cross moves not the heart to penitence and the obedience of love, there, it may be concluded, some vital error has prevailed, some offence against the truth, which has occasioned the Holy Spirit to withdraw himself, and leave the huge body, destined to be his temple, without life and beauty.

Another discourse, or the decree of the council, followed the address of the legates. It was delivered by the bishop of Castellamare, and, like that already read, exhorted the bishops and clergy to a more zealous performance of their various duties. " Let them apply themselves to prayer," it said, " and the celebration of the mass. Let them fast and give alms. Let the prelates live soberly, abstain from the indulgence of luxury at their tables, and not engage in light and useless conversation." To this was added the equally important exhortation, that, the darkness of error being dissipated, care should be taken to search for truth ; and this with all attention to sobriety, temperance, and peace.

Nothing further was done in this session of the coun-

cil. On the 13th of the month it again assembled, but only, as it seemed, to prorogue its meeting till the 18th, when it was expected a larger number of prelates would have arrived to give dignity and authority to its decrees.

The most casual observer could hardly fail to discover, in the dilatory and uncertain proceedings of the assembly, that those who had the ordering of its debates were as yet but very imperfectly acquainted with the designs which afterwards employed them, to the full extent of their energy. To prevent the danger which might result from the vague and indefinite views which thus prevailed, the pope assembled a certain number of cardinals and other dignitaries of his court, and having established them as a permanent body, gave it them in charge to watch the proceedings of the council, and to take such measures, from time to time, as the defence of his interests might render necessary. The legates, anxious to know the line of policy which it would be expedient for them to pursue, made inquiries of the pontiff, which prove in a striking manner the confusion which must have prevailed in the councils of the church, at this important period. No plan had been laid down for the conduct of the debates. It was undetermined whether heretics or heresies should be made the objects of consideration; whether the opening of the council should be publicly announced, and the princes and bishops of different nations be exhorted to pray for its success, by the members of the assembly, or whether this should be done by the pope.* The same uncertainty existed as to the manner of voting, the drawing up of the decrees, and, above all, as to the means to be employed in reconciling the discordant feelings and interests which were already seen to exist among the bishops and other dignitaries in the assembly. To these inquiries was added a request, that regular posts might be established between Trent and Rome, and a larger supply of money remitted, the 2000

* Fra Paolo. *Le Courayer*, t. i. liv. ii. n. 29.

crowns sent a short time before having been distributed among the more necessitous of the bishops.

No time was lost in answering these inquiries. The legates were instructed to take care that the votes should not be given by nations, a mode, it was said, unknown to antiquity, and only introduced, with much danger, at the councils of Constance and Basil. Their grand object was to be the preservation of the papal power, in its pre-eminence over all other authorities; and to aid them in this duty, another sum of 2000 crowns was sent them for the use of the necessitous prelates, who were also exempted from the payment of tithes to Rome, so long as they might be present at the council.

The intentions of the pope were not more agreeable to the views of many of the ecclesiastics assembled at Trent, than they were to the protestants. Thus the Spanish bishops loudly exclaimed against the bull which freed them from the payment of tithes, as implying a right on the part of Rome which they did not acknowledge; while the numerous and powerful prelates of France protested, with still greater zeal, against the council being simply termed *sacrosancta synodus*, demanding, at the same time, that these words should be added,—*ecclesiam universalem representans*. This demand involved an attack on the irresponsibility of the pontiff; and the legates replied, that if the assembly were thus described as representing the universal church, a door would be opened to many difficulties, and it might next be added, that the council derived its authority immediately from Jesus Christ, and consequently possessed a power, to which every dignity, even that of the pope himself, must yield. Convinced of the importance of the subject, the French bishops vehemently urged their request, and drew over many prelates of other nations to join in the demand; but the influence of the papal representatives prevailed; and the dispute was at length, though unwillingly, suspended.

Opinions the most contradictory prevailed as to the proper subjects for immediate consideration in the as-

sembly. The party in the interests of the emperor, and at the head of which was the cardinal Madruccio, strongly insisted on the propriety of beginning with measures of reformation. "It would be useless," they said, "to treat of doctrines, while manners and discipline remain in that state of corruption whence all the errors of the age had their origin. Nor ought the contrary practice of the ancient councils to be alleged in opposition to this ; since, in the times when they were held, vice prevailed to a less alarming degree in the Christian church, heresy being then its mightiest and most deadly enemy." The legates listened to this advice with ill-concealed dislike. It was far more alarming to Rome to see inquiry sharpening the intellects of acute observers preparing to investigate the foundations of its power, the sources of its wealth, than to hear them beginning a debate on subjects which, it was more than probable, would quickly involve them in the inextricable trammels of controversy and mysticism. There is little reason to believe that the pontiff would have long hesitated about calling a council, had he been able to assure himself that it would confine its views to the correction of doctrinal errors. But few persons in this case would have understood enough of the subjects in dispute, to become thereby the enemies of a church in the communion of which they had been brought up, and to which they were attached by so many ties of sympathy and ancient reverence. Their confidence in its infallibility might have been shaken ; and some, ambitious of independence, would have, perhaps, seized the opportunity to shake off the yoke imposed by education ; but the multitude, as in other cases of controversy, would have soon returned to its state of tranquil acquiescence in the dogmas established, and the church would have enjoyed higher consideration than it gained from this its seeming triumph. But when the manners of the clergy were to be examined, the most ordinary mind could form a judgment on the grounds of complaint. The passions would find a plea to engage in the discussion ; and, a

conviction once gained, who could foresee where the mischief would stop, or how long it would be before the church could regain its influence over the affections or prejudices of the people?

The advice given by this party in the council was directly opposed by that of another, which consisted of zealous defenders of the papacy, with all its subject train of abuses and corruptions. It was argued by these theorists, that, as faith is the mother of Christian graces, attention ought first to be paid to the purifying of doctrine from the taint of heresy; which, being removed, would leave the Gospel to work the cure of every remaining evil. This reasoning would have been correct if it were true that the corruption of faith leads to corruption of morals, but that the corruption of morals do not lead to that of doctrine. A fair view of the subject, however, will show that the latter has as often been the case as the former; and that in respect to the evils prevailing at the time alluded to, they were, both doctrinal and practical, the result not so much of error in opinion as of base, sensual, and sordid dispositions, corrupting all the sources of intelligence.

But neither extreme could be right; and a third party sprang up, which seemed disposed to exercise its judgment in choosing a middle path, and taking immediate cognisance of both the important objects named in the preliminary discussion. To effect this, it was proposed that the council should divide itself into different chambers, each of which should devote itself to one or other of the subjects agitated, and bring its debates to a conclusion, distinct from the rest. The only objection to this would have been, that an assembly loses much of its solemnity and authority when thus divided into sections; and that, constituted as that of Trent was, it would have been very difficult to persuade the whole to agree to the decisions of any of its parts.

There was still another party. This consisted of those who were more anxious to calm the tumult of war and civil strife, than either assert, or assail, the dignity

of the Roman church. The French lent all their influence to support these views ; and still further manifested their comparative indifference to the mere ecclesiastical portion of the inquiry, by urging the necessity of inviting the Lutherans to attend the council, and making every concession to the spirit of forbearance, and Christian charity.

The legates found themselves pressed with fresh difficulties in this diversity of opinion, and, fearful of giving offence to either party, could only have recourse to their wonted policy of deferring their answer, and in the mean time seeking advice from Rome. But so badly was the zeal of these champions of the church answered by its head, that Paul III. allowed them to remain from day to day without either a reply to their questions, or the remission of any of those farther sums of money which they stated to be absolutely necessary to the continuance of their influence over the poorer bishops. Different reasons have been alleged for this strange conduct on the part of the pontiff. On the one side it is stated, that his attention was wholly engaged by the war in which his interests, and those of Europe at large, were likely to be so deeply involved : on the other, it is supposed that he considered his general advice to the legates sufficient for their present guidance ; and that it would be safer to defer any more particular directions till circumstances should arise which might make him better acquainted with the state of parties.*

It appears that the work of reformation might, at this period, have been greatly promoted by a large and powerful section of the Romish hierarchy, had it not been the policy of Paul III. to prevent either change or inquiry which could in any way endanger his own immediate interests. The French, the Imperialists, and many even of the Italian and Spanish bishops, delivered sentiments which proved their willingness to make whatever concessions might be necessary to satisfy

* This is the opinion of Courayer, who finds fault with Fra Paoli for his conjecture that the pope forgot the council in his attention to the subject of the war. *Hist. Conc. Trente*, t. i. liv. 11. n. 37. Fleury.

the public call for peace and reform. But the legates were ever ready with arguments for delay. The examination of doctrine was represented as the first duty of such an assembly of ecclesiastics ; and when cardinal Madruccio spoke warmly against the vices and avarice of the age, he was answered by a bitter allusion to his own rich possessions in the church, and told, in plain words, to go home and reform himself.

After a long debate, it was agreed that the two subjects of inquiry should be pursued together ; and the legates, it is said, regarded the determination as a signal triumph. Had the feeling in favour of commencing with the topic of reform finally prevailed, they would have found themselves engaged in a work for which they were wholly incompetent. Neither instruction nor authority had been given them for the conduct of a discussion of this kind ; and as the members of the council already manifested impatience at the frequent prorogations which had taken place, they would have been obliged to have recourse to some desperate expedient for dissolving the assembly, or have had to sacrifice far more than their master contemplated to the concealed or open friends of the reformation. The present arrangement offered the prospect of continued delay. Nothing, in reality, was likely to be determined while the minds of men were one day agitated by the bold encounter of polemics, and another by the practical calculations of reform. In many cases, the antagonists on the one side would act as friends on the other, and the efforts of enemies might always be neutralised by a judicious application to their respective prejudices and wishes in cases of slight importance.

The legates, however, were not long allowed to indulge themselves in this notion of success. Both the pope and his consistory received intelligence of what had passed in the council with surprise and alarm. They had expected that the legates would make no concession whatever to the clamour of the assembly, and that it would have been obliged, at their instance, to

confine itself wholly to questions of opinion and doctrine. An order accordingly was sent, prohibiting the publication of the decree of the last session, and expressly stating that the meeting was on no account to concern itself, at present, with the discussion of reform. The legates, in reply, movingly described the distress and embarrassment caused them by such a determination on the part of the pope. "Are we to be made," said they, "a laughing-stock to all the world?" Or is it supposed, exclaim the members of the council, "that Paul III. is to amuse himself with us, as Alexander V. did with the council of Pisa, and Martin V. with that of Constance?" "It is generally believed by the bishops," added the offended legates, "that the Roman pontiffs have refused to assemble councils because they fear reform; and had we absolutely denied to the meeting the liberty of discussing this subject, we should but have placed in danger the very authority which it is our purpose to support." *

In the session held on the 4th of February, the archbishop of Sassari read the decree which had been passed. This important document purported, that as the council had assembled for the grand object of extirpating heresy, and reforming manners, it had resolved to commence its proceedings, according to the example of the ancient councils, by a profession of faith; trusting thereby to obtain the blessing of God, and to stand armed, with the best shield it could employ, against the poisoned arrows of schismatics. The decree was formally admitted, but at a subsequent congregation the cardinal legate del Monte proposed that it should be suppressed, as displeasing to the pope. This proposal roused the indignation of the bishop of Astorga, who demanded on what authority a decree could be suppressed, or altered, which had been passed by the common consent of the fathers. "The tribunals of Spain," said he, "have made me acquainted with no instance of any president of an assembly venturing to interfere

* Fleury, liv, cxlii. n. 39.

with its determinations." Such a rebuke could not be unheeded, and the legate, excusing himself in the best way he was able, desisted from his attempt.*

The attention of the congregation was next called to the proper method of proceeding, in the session to be opened on the 8th of April, and which, it was expected, would be much more fertile in consequences than the previous meetings. Several congregations devoted their sittings to this object: and it was agreed, according to the advice of the president, that the first article of the decree should determine the authority and canon of Scripture; and the second, the nature and proofs of tradition. Three archbishops, and three bishops were charged with the duty of putting this decision into proper form; and another set of divines received a commission to examine the text of Scripture, and to report respecting the corruptions and interpolations which, it was suspected, had crept into the sacred volume.

On the completion of their labour, the members of this important commission reported to the congregation that most of the errors to be found in the text of Scripture arose from the negligence of the publishers and transcribers; and the bishop of Bitonte, by whom this report was delivered, expressed a hope that any future danger from this cause might be prevented by the imposition of a heavy fine on those who were guilty of negligence in copying the Word of God. Few passages in the history of this remarkable council are more interesting than the present proceedings. While two of the bishops spoke in the strongest manner against the notion that the church had a right to impose fines for imperfect publications, cardinal Pachéco proposed that a law should be passed prohibiting translations of the Scripture into the living languages. But so far had the spirit of reform penetrated even into the bosom of the papal hierarchy, that cardinal Madruccio immediately observed, that Germany was scandalised at

* Fleury, *ibid.*, 57. Fra Paoli, *liv. ii. n. 53.*

the bare mention of depriving the people of the light of Scripture, which, according to the apostle, ought to be the subject of men's continual meditation. "Yes," rejoined Pachéco, "but this reading of the Bible was prohibited in Spain with the consent of Paul II." "We grant it," replied Madruccio: "Paul II., however, or any other pope, might be mistaken, but the apostle Paul could not." *

The disputes which followed exhibited a singular specimen of the boldness with which error will defend itself against the arms, and even the persuasiveness, of truth. There were not wanting those in the council of Trent who had a competent knowledge of the ancient languages, and a sufficient acquaintance with biblical literature to enable them to judge rightly on the points in dispute. Isidore Clarius, a Benedictine monk of considerable erudition, stated, that from the time of Gregory the Italian version, and the translation by St. Jerome, were in common use; but that these two versions had been comprised in a single edition of the Scriptures, known under the title of the Vulgate. This translation received the praises of Clarius as the best existing; but he cautiously added, that no version ought ever to be considered as equivalent in authority to the original.

Andrew Vega, a Spanish monk of the Franciscan order, confirmed the sentiment last expressed, by remarking that no interpreter ought to be regarded as inspired; but that, nevertheless, the Latin church might properly acknowledge the Vulgate as authentic, and as containing nothing contrary to Christian doctrine or precept, though not, in all places, strictly conformable to the original. It had, moreover, he represented, the authority given by antiquity, for it was used a thousand years before in the most celebrated councils of the church, and might fairly, therefore, be commended to general use, full liberty being allowed to the scholar to consult and use the Bible in its original languages. †

* Fleury, cxlii. n. 57.

† Fra Paoli, t. i. liv. ii. n. 51. Fleury.

Such were some of the proceedings which marked the opening session of the council. We turn, for a brief space, from their consideration, to notice an event which, while regarded as a matter of triumph by the most influential members of that assembly, filled the minds of protestants with the deepest and most earnest sorrow.

The colloquy of Ratisbonne, which commenced at the beginning of February, appeared likely to pass over without producing any important effect on the condition of the reformers in Germany. It was rendered respectable, however, in the eyes of both parties, by the character of the theologians which it had gathered together * ; and Christendom looked with anxious expectation for the issue of the two most important meetings that had been summoned in the later ages of the church. The council of Trent, and the colloquy of Ratisbonne, were different in their constitution ; but the general ends proposed by both were the same. To attain these results the action of some mighty principle was required, or the directing influence of some mind which, unbending in its determination, and correspondingly noble in its views, might have taught the more timid, the vacillating, and the dishonest, to venerate the majesty of truth.

It was at this period, when his services seemed so greatly needed to further the designs of the protestants, that Luther drew nigh to the close of his career. He had for some time past been conscious that he stood on the borders of eternity. His conversation abounded in allusions to the mighty change preparing for him ; and he then only appeared touched with melancholy, when he spoke or thought of his own failure in holiness, or of the yet imperfect state of the great work which the providence of God had led him to commence. No man ever laboured more earnestly than Luther to establish the doctrine of justification by faith, or to overturn the fatal notion of human merit. And, while he exhorted his hearers to look for safety in the contrite confession of their sins, he exhibited in the feeling of

* Sleidan. Seckendorf.

his own heart so deep a sense of unworthiness, such an almost agonising sorrow at the recollection of his infirmities, that every one could at once see how utterly poor and wretched he considered himself, except as he could take advantage of the riches of a Saviour's righteousness. Thus sublimely humble, thus eminently sincere in the profession of evangelical faith, the sorrows of the penitent were always mingled with the love and triumphs of the believer.

When this wonderful man turned from the contemplation of his own state to that of the church, he viewed events not in the spirit of a self-satisfied leader, but with the stern feeling of one determined to calculate, as exactly as possible, not merely the amount of good obtained, but the dangers which existed to prevent its increase, or its preservation. "I have lived long enough," said he, in one of his saddest moods. "God grant that I may quietly lay aside this burdensome worm-bag in the earth! I have, without doubt, seen the best that man can see in this world: all things will now, I fear, grow worse."

A strong feeling, not of confidence in his unaided power, but of trust in the means whereby he had been made the instrument of much good, led him to believe that his own departure would be the signal for a general onset, by all the enemies of truth and holiness, upon the newly-erected fortress of scriptural belief. "As long as I live," said he one day to some friends collected round his dinner-table, "no danger, I trust in God, will arise, and Germany will enjoy the blessings of peace. But if I die, then begin to pray, for you will have need of prayer: our children must grasp the spear, and the land will fare badly. Therefore I say, when I am dead, exercise yourselves diligently in prayer." This deep and prophetic apprehension of coming ills made him look for death, in his own case, as a harbinger of good. In one of his last sermons preached at Wittenberg, he expressed a desire that the people would cease to pray for his life; and his motive seems to

have been stated in this melancholy passage : — “ If I should live a hundred years, and could subdue all future enemies as I have overcome my present foes, yet, I see well, my successors would have no rest, for the devil still lives and reigns. My only desire, therefore, is for a short and gracious season of departure : I care no longer about life.”

Thus daily expecting the stroke which should lay him low, Luther was still anxious to employ his hours in the most profitable manner. On the 23d of January, 1545, he set out on his way to Eisleben. His object in undertaking this journey was to settle a dispute which had arisen between the counts of Mansfeld and their tenants. Luther's heart was awake to whatever concerned the interests of his friends ; and he had many in this scene of his early days. “ I shall die happily,” said he, “ if I can reconcile the counts, and restore peace among them.” *

The season of the year added not a little to the fatigue of the journey ; and he was detained for three days at Halle, owing to the impassable state of the swollen rivers. Impatient of further delay, he at last resolved to make the passage in a ferry-boat. Justus Jonas, and his three sons, accompanied him ; and when they were safely across, he laughingly remarked to his friend, what a joy it would have been to the devil, could he have managed to plunge us all into the stream.

His presence at Eisleben was hailed with every demonstration of respect ; and he enjoyed sufficient influence to settle the business which he had taken in hand. The rapid decay of his strength gave, hourly, fresh alarm to his friends ; but he continued to preach, and even ordained two ministers of the protestant church, during the little time left at his disposal. His prayers, his conversation, seemed more deeply imbued than ever with spiritual grace. He would stand and pray, it is said, before he went to bed, with such a force and

* Luther's Leben, Pfizer.

elevation of mind, that those who listened to him were filled with astonishment.

On the 17th of February, his weakness had so greatly increased, that he could no longer leave his room without extreme difficulty. Not willing to remain away from his friends, he continued to attend them at the usual supper hour ; and his conversation, though often alluding to his expected dissolution, was pleasant and lively. So violent, however, were the pains that seized him soon after partaking of supper, that he could not refrain from crying out aloud. Hot cloths were applied to his body, and the count of Mansfeld himself assisted the attendants in endeavouring to soothe his agony. The means employed were for a time successful. About ten o'clock, he fell into a calm deep sleep, and his friends, watching over him with tender solicitude, conceived hopes that he would rise refreshed and comforted ; but, an hour after, he suddenly woke, and exclaimed to Dr. Jonas, who stood near, " O Lord God, what agony do I suffer ! How my breast is burdened ! Yes ! I shall remain in Eisleben ! " On hearing him utter these lamentations, his sons, together with the count and countess of Mansfeld, gathered round his bed ; and an appearance of perspiration inspired Dr. Jonas with a fresh hope that the pain might again be got under. " Jonas," said the sufferer, " this is the cold sweat of death. The malady increases, and I shall soon give up the ghost." Then composing himself to prayer, he exclaimed three times, " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ! " He spoke little after this ; and his friend Jonas, seeing him grow weaker and weaker, said, " Venerable father, do you die trusting in Christ, and in the Gospel, according to the doctrine you have preached ? " Summoning, as it seemed, all the strength of his heart and spirit, he answered aloud, " Yes ! " and then sunk again into the calm of exhausted nature. At the mention of his name he sighed deeply, but without any appearance of pain or apprehension, and, folding his hands together, lay tranquilly till between two and three in the morning,

when he breathed forth his spirit, as if the pain of dying had been already overcome.*

Thus ended the career of the most remarkable man known in the Christian church since the days of the apostles. If we compare him with the primitive professors of the Gospel, he is equal to the noblest among them for courage, self-devotedness, purity of conduct, and earnestness of zeal. If we examine his sentiments by the rule of Scripture, they exhibit the most faithful adherence to the word of the Spirit, the most patient willingness to be taught, and to teach, only as a child in wisdom, though full of strength as a child of God.

The most wonderful quality of Luther's character was seen in the power with which he could execute any part of the duty which belonged to him as a religious reformer. Grand and comprehensive in his views, he brought within the sphere of vision the most remote consequences of his undertaking; and, seeing the difficulties to be apprehended from personal as well as public opposition, pursued, with equal skill, the proper means for lessening the power of both. Had he been simply a politician, he would have surpassed all others in the same career by his penetration, his knowledge of character, and ability to make circumstances bend to his necessity. In the ranks of philosophy he would have enjoyed a not less distinguished position, many of his views on general subjects being as interesting for their originality as his theological statements are valuable for their scriptural tendency and simplicity. But whatever were the qualities of his mind, whatever its power or riches, they were all employed on the one grand object, for the execution of which he had been set apart by the Divine Head of the church. No strivings of ambition diverted him from seeking the glory of God. No weaknesses of fear or love could persuade him to

* Fuit omnino vir magnanimus, qui talia ausus est quæ totus miratur orbis, et qui tot gentibus adversus se conspirantibus unum se opposuit. Atque utinam parem addidisset animi moderationem, nec frena affectibus nimis laxasset. Profecto tranquilliores post se reliquisset Ecclesias. G. Hornii Hist. Eccles., p. 328.

compromise what he believed to be the purity of evangelical truth. He went forward, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, whether threatened by the power or lured by the wiles of the devil.

If compared with some of those patterns of solitary holiness, the ascetics of the early church, or the monks and hermits of the middle ages, Luther may be regarded as inferior to them, both in strictness of life, and freedom from worldliness of temper. But it ought not to be lost sight of, that Luther had a work to perform which obliged him to leave retirement, and shake off the feelings which, cultivated in solitude, render meditation an all-sufficient support, as well as comfort, to the mind. We must not expect to find the virtues of the ascetic — aided as he is by every circumstance that can tranquillise the soul, subdue the passions, and open the heart to celestial visions, to ministering angels of spiritual delight — in the character of those who have to harden themselves for warfare in the open world, and to endure toils which put to flight every present expectation of repose. The employments of men of mind, if ardently pursued, receive a light from their own intellectuality ; but they do not fail, in their turn, to exercise an influence on those by whom they are followed. A Christian can never be a worldling, but a Christian in the world cannot be fairly judged of, at first sight, as a Christian in solitude ; nor ought he to be considered as failing in spiritual-mindedness, although he appear not so singularly remote in manners and habits from the rest of mankind as he who has been able to shake off all the trammels of social cares and duties, and leave the world for the solitude and independence of the wilderness.

The writings of Luther are so voluminous, that, did we not know his history, it might be supposed that he had devoted his entire life to the labours of authorship. Few of his works are of a nature to admit of the idea that little exertion of thought or inquiry was required for their composition. His extensive commentaries on Scripture afford evidence of the most

patient application of mind, and of the employment of an erudition which, vast for the times in which he lived, could only have been obtained by habits of laborious study. The translation of the Bible is still acknowledged to be a wonderful performance, even as a translation; and what shall we think of the man capable of executing such a work in the midst of the dangers and distractions which beset the path of the great reformer?

Add to all this, that Luther was as diligent in exercising the office of a preacher as if he had been merely a parish priest. His sermons, moreover, were such as, for the most part, might have been preached by a man who had no other view than that of instructing an ordinary congregation in the doctrines and duties pertaining to the Christian profession. In speaking of himself as a preacher, he once said, "To preach Christ is a difficult and dangerous office. Had I earlier known how weighty an office it is, I should never have ventured to undertake it; but should have said, with Moses, 'Send whom thou wilt.' " On another occasion, when discoursing with one of his friends, who complained to him of the weakness and inefficiency of his own pulpit exercises, he said, "Ah, my dear friend, how well do I understand what you mean. But you will become more skilful and learned as you proceed; and will seek, perhaps, and obtain honour. Remember, however, that you are to preach our Lord Jesus Christ, and take no notice of what the people say or think." * It was his favourite maxim that the most simple style, the plainest words and the plainest things, best became a preacher. "One must say to the poor people," he remarked, "that white is white, and black black. Time, place, and the character of the hearers must all be considered, if a man wishes to be useful. He will regard his people as a mother does her children, invite and lead them to the truth, and feed them with the milk of the word." "I cannot preach or make a sermon according to art," he said. "It does not seem necessary to speak on every

* Pfizer. Luther's Leben.

point of a subject, but only on that which is most important, and on which the whole appears to rest. This principal point often presents itself to me as I am proceeding, without my having previously thought especially thereon; and I should be too long in my discourse were I to follow up every idea at similar length.

Thus mighty in the endowments of intellect, and spiritual in his views and labours, was the reformer of Wittemberg. His faults are soon numbered. They were, impetuosity of temper, and a consequent want of patience and charity towards opponents; a strong tendency of heart to pride; an occasional indulgence of wrath, which, cherished from a principle of zeal supposed to be right, assumed at length a command over his feelings which, even had it been lawful at the beginning, could only be evil in its continuance and results. These were the remains of the natural man: the humbling evidences that faith and wisdom may have wrought wonders, while charity has still to plead for admission into the heart. The only apology that can be made for Luther in this respect is, that while the faults alluded to were deeply rooted in his natural character, their developement was greatly promoted by most of the circumstances of his life.

Returning now to the council of Trent,—that august body prepared for its fourth session with all the solemnities fitted for an occasion on which were to be decided questions of the highest importance to what had hitherto been considered the universal church. The reading of the decrees occupied the attention of the meeting for a large portion of the time devoted to its present sitting. In the first of these documents it was stated, that the council having for its object the preservation of the gospel in its purity, as promised in the prophets, published by Jesus Christ, and preached by his apostles; as being the source of all truths which regard the salvation of the soul, or the rule of conduct; and considering that these truths, and this rule, are contained in the sacred

books, or in the traditions received by the apostles from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, or put into the minds of the same apostles by the Holy Spirit, and handed down from generation to generation, even to the present, — that the holy council, considering these things, did receive all the books of the Old and New Testaments, and also the traditions regarding faith and manners, as proceeding from the mouth of Jesus Christ, or from the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the catholic church by a continued succession of witnesses. A list of the books of Scripture, as they stand in the Vulgate, was appended to this declaration, and the most terrible anathemas were published against those who should refuse to admit the canon as thus established, or the authority of tradition.*

* Fra Paoli, t. i. liv. ii. Courayer, p. 288. Fleury. The following passage from Mr. Mendham's valuable volume will throw light on this curious passage in the history of the council: —

“The next letter to the usual correspondent, the most reverend Farnese, of the 26th of April, pursues the same subject, and combats the same objection. This young cardinal and critic is reported as wishing to know, why, in receiving the Vulgate as authentic, no mention was made of correcting it; since it is manifest that there are errors in it which can ill be attributed to the press. The answer is, that, after long disputation upon the subject, many of the learned of different nations held, that the vulgar edition was that of St. Jerome. Others agreed unanimously, that the edition used in the Roman church was the most secure, as never having been accused of heresy, although it might appear to vary in some places from the Hebrew and Greek text; and however humble, barbaric, or solecistic its style might be, the originals were corrupted by the Hebrews and heretics; and therefore no course was so secure, as to rest upon that church, which, besides being the head of Christendom, had even, by the special privilege and favour of God, been preserved without spot of heresy, and with a perpetual and uninterrupted succession of pontiffs. Although the incorrections do not touch matters of faith, the synod has not thought proper to adopt the opinion of the deputies, nor to confess by a public decree that the edition was formally corrupt; but in this dilemma judged it more expedient to correct the books tacitly, and to issue them with the authority of their lord, and with the approbation of the synod, than to rectify an error at a time when there would be no remedy. It was therefore concluded at the last general congregation, that his holiness should be written to, in the name of the synod, as is now done, to correct with all expedition the last edition, and then the Greek and Hebrew bibles; and the same being done here, that the joint labours should produce, with the authority of the pope and council, a correct bible, which should be published, for the perpetual conservation of the faith. The legates give seven reasons for the course which they had taken, among which the most observable are, — that which represents it as the declaration of their adversaries, that they have separated from the Roman church, not only on account of its bad manners, but likewise its false doctrine; and it would be a confirmation of their statement, if the sacred Scriptures, which for centuries she has published, proclaimed, and interpreted, should be acknowledged to be erroneous; nor would it avail to say, that the errors did not affect faith, since from one error might be deduced an infinity, and

In the second decree, the version of the Scriptures, generally known under the title of the Vulgate, is pronounced authentic ; and it is declared unlawful to publish any explication of Scripture which bears a contrary sense to that given by the church, the true judge of interpretations, or to the unanimous opinion of the fathers. A provision is next made for the publication of the translation thus authorised ; and it is pronounced a crime to publish, sell, or even possess anonymous writings treating of sacred things. The ambassador of the emperor appeared at this session of the council ; and the reply to his address—both the one and the other as unimportant to the world as they were flattering and pompous in expression—terminated the business of the meeting. But the publication of the decrees excited a feeling little agreeable to those by whose influence they had been passed. “How is it,” said men of inquiring minds, “that five cardinals and forty-eight bishops should have been able so soon to determine points hitherto left in obscurity, and to have decided that books are canonical which, till now, were regarded as apochryphal. How can they have obtained the right to pronounce a translation authentic, which is in several places contrary to the original ; or to prohibit any one from examining for himself the meaning of the Divine Word ?” These questions implied no great faith in the

that, the last, which proposes, that in case the errors should be judged important, an amended edition might be published without scandal or infamy, every error being ascribable either to ancient or modern transcribers.

“There is something instructive in all this ; and the reader, who is at all acquainted with biblical or papal literature, needs only to be referred to the tardy and inauspicious result of this altercation, which, so much more favourably for some than for Trent, was carried into execution by the pontiffs, in this respect not very concordant, Sixtus V. and Clement VIII., the latter of whom, after obliterating, by pasting over, the errors of his predecessor, with little satisfaction or little effect, was induced at length to draw the broad stroke of infallible condemnation over the whole surface of his predecessor’s amended Bible, and, after the lapse of forty-six years from the time of the present history, published to the Roman world an edition of their Bible, which might be esteemed correct. This pontiff, it is well known, availed himself of the delicate hint to ascribe all errors to printers : and woe would have been to them, if they told the truth. Thus the 2000 variations are satisfactorily settled. It is enough to refer to the labours of our able and meritorious, but ill-encouraged, James, on this subject.” Council of Trent, p. 65.

authority of the council. Still less were appearances favourable to its success when it was asked, in a similar tone, which among the prelates who assisted at these proceedings enjoyed any reputation for knowledge ; or whether the canonists who were most respectable for skill in their proper pursuits, had any proportionable acquaintance with the great questions of theology ? It was asserted, in short, that the bishops who acted so important a part in the council were wholly destitute of the knowledge which became their station ; that they were, for the most part, gentlemen and courtiers ; and that those who were any thing more than titular bishops, presided over dioceses so small, that, put altogether, they would not make a thousandth part of Christendom.*

The indefiniteness of the decrees formed another subject for criticism. No command, it was said, had been given respecting the receiving of traditions, but only a prohibition against treating them with contempt ; so that, in fact, the whole mass of traditions, according to this, might be rejected, if it were done respectfully. The same doubts were expressed on that part of the decree which related to the Vulgate. "What avails it to know that the version is authentic, if a guide be not given us in the choice of editions ?"—a question which, it may be seen, was in reality answered by the provisions made for printing a more correct copy of the version than those which at present existed.

Paul III. now began to observe with more interest than hitherto the proceedings of the council. Subjects were brought forward on which no decision could be passed without more or less influencing his authority. The consequence was, that the legates received fresh instructions, and an energy appeared in the movements of the papal court which it had not before exhibited. Three points were particularly insisted upon in the directions

* Courayer objects to this remark, and complains of his author as unjust to the theologians alluded to. But Fra Paoli does not express the sentiment as his own. He simply says that such was the opinion commonly expressed, and especially in Germany. Tom. i. p. 291.

forwarded to the legates. In the first place, they were to publish no decree without having submitted it to examination at Rome: in the second, they were to take care not to treat as matters of controversy things about which all the world seemed already agreed; an error committed, it was said, in the session just passed: and, in the third place, they were not to suffer, under any pretence whatever, the papal authority to be made the subject of debate.

The pontiff had cause for the anxiety manifested in these instructions. Not only was it plain that a large portion of the members of the council, though wrought upon by the legates at the moment of voting, were not altogether cordial in their support, but that the party acting under the influence of the emperor was resolved to do its utmost to diminish his power. The suspicion thus engendered received a strong confirmation from the result of his proceedings against the archbishop of Cologne. After a protracted controversy, the clergy of the diocese had induced the pope to declare the archbishop excommunicated, and to deprive him of all his ecclesiastical dignities. But so little inclined was the emperor to take part with the church on this occasion, that, though its sentence was pronounced in the most solemn manner, and published to the world,—though the pontiff represented it to him as a matter of the highest importance to the dignity of the hierarchy, and even obtained the sanction of the learned university of Louvain to the proceeding,—Charles remained firm in his refusal to acknowledge the deposition, and continued to treat and address the archbishop of Cologne in the same manner as before the act of excommunication.*

Anxious to defer the question of reform till more auspicious times, the pope desired the legates to engage the council in the discussion of the doctrine of original sin,—a subject the labyrinths of which, he well knew, would speedily free him from any present anxiety respecting the re-appearance of those who might engage in

* Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xvii. 311.

the debate. The Spanish ambassador, Toledo, suspecting the intention of the legates, and determined to prevent their escape from the more necessary business of the council, did not hesitate to inform them, that it was the emperor's wish that the assembly should confine its present views to the subject of reformation, rather than attempt the discussion of points of doctrine, which required a less prompt consideration than matters of a practical nature.

The congregations held at this time exhibited a melancholy proof of the want of concord between the leading members of the church. Cardinals wrangled with cardinals, bishops with bishops, and almost the entire body of the prelacy rose in arms against the authority of the pope and the privileges of the monastic order, which the bishops regarded as a usurpation of the common rights of episcopacy. This, and other circumstances, rendered the legates suspicious of every manifestation of independence in the order; and when the bishop of Fiesoli ventured to tax them with an attempt to limit the freedom of the council, they not only insulted him by a reprimand, but prepared to make him depart the city. The bishop of Fiesoli was not the only prelate who had been taught to tremble before the legates. An expression of indignation at the appearance of things in the council had brought upon the bishop of Chiozza such a storm of angry looks, that he saw reason to tremble for his personal safety; and, pretending sickness, he made a hasty retreat from this dangerous position to his diocese.*

Paul III. could not be induced to give up the rules he had laid down for the proceedings at Trent. In vain had the legates represented to him the earnest desire of the ambassador, Toledo, of many prelates, and even of the emperor himself, that he would allow the council to begin its consultations on the subject of reform. "No! If we allow princes to be our guide, we shall never see the end of disputes. Pay no heed to

* Fra Paoli, t. i. liv. ii. p. 300. Courayer.

the representations of Toledo. Excuse yourselves as you best can to the emperor; and at once propose for discussion the article of original sin!" This was the purport of the pontiff's answer, and his ministers proceeded immediately to obey his orders. An intimation had been given, that no corrections of the Vulgate were to be attempted without fresh orders from Rome. The divines, therefore, who had been chosen to examine the version, were straightway dismissed. In the next place, it was determined to settle the question which had arisen out of the disputes between the bishops and the monastic orders. The former pretended that they alone had the right to appoint preachers, and provide for the instruction of the people. To this the latter replied, that, supposing such to have been originally the case, they had forfeited their right by leaving the duty appended to it unperformed.*

This dispute was viewed by the supporters of the papacy as one of the most important that had been started. The power of the bishops, it had long been discovered, could not consist well with the high pretensions of the sovereign pontiff. No means presented itself so well adapted to lessen this antagonist influence of episcopacy, as the rising spirit of monasticism. Between the abbot and the pope there was no probable cause of rivalry; but between the bishop and the pope, and the bishop and the abbot, there was a twofold source of jealousy. Something of the same kind might be found to exist in the inferior grades of the two orders of priests and monks, all ranks of the clergy having reason to desire freedom from the unlimited power of a distant and irresponsible potentate; while the monastic orders must have always felt that they could exist only by his favour and protection.

The importance of the matter was fully understood by the court of Rome, and the instructions transmitted to the legates breathed the very spirit of caution. Both parties were to be appeased; both were to be satisfied:

* Fra Paoli, t. i. liv. ii. n. 61.

that temporising conduct, in short, was to be pursued which should conceal from the eyes of men the prevailing fears and wishes of the chief. By appealing to the bishops, especially to those of Italy, on the duty which they owed to the pope, and then flattering their love of power, by obliging the monastic preachers to ask for their licences before exercising the function of teachers, they induced them to yield some of the points of most consequence to the interests of the pope. But scarcely had the prelates expressed themselves satisfied, when the leaders of the monkish party protested against the terms of the arrangement; and it was not till after a long and humiliating struggle, that the legates could persuade these quarrelsome rivals to submit their private interests to the good of the church.*

The debates on the subject of free-will were at length commenced; and, it having been first agreed that the opinions of the German divines should be sought through the proper channels, the inquiry was instituted upon these nine propositions: — 1. That Adam, by his transgression, had incurred the anger of God, and the punishment of death; but that, although degenerated both in soul and body, he transmitted not his sin, but only the corporal punishment, to his posterity. 2. That the sin of Adam is called original sin, not because it was transmitted from Adam, but because it has passed from him to his posterity by imitation. 3. That original sin is ignorance or contempt of God, taking away all fear and reverence for the Supreme Being, and infecting body, soul, and will with a general corruption. 4. That even in children there is an inclination to evil, which, in its growth, produces an extreme aversion to holy things, and a passionate love of the world, which is original sin. 5. That infants, although baptized for the remission of sins, do not come into the world with any sin derived from Adam. 6. That baptism does not put away original sin, but only prevents its being imputed, so that it is, as it were, erased, and, gradually losing its

force in this life, is entirely eradicated in the world to come. 7. That this sin remaining in baptized persons, retards their entrance into heaven. 8. That concupiscence, which may be called the nourishment of sin, and which remains after baptism, is truly a sin. 9. That, besides corporal death, and the other imperfections to which the present life is subject, the fire of hell is the principal punishment due to original sin. *

It will at once be seen, that the only points of real importance in these articles are to be found in the first and second propositions; the others being immediately derivable from the truth universally allowed, that sin, however imbibed, acts like the poison of an infection, destroying whatever might be good, wise, or holy in human nature. Innumerable authorities were brought forward by the disputants to justify their several interpretations of the term original sin; and Augustin, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, afforded the most learned among them a rich variety of logical niceties for determining a matter which, in the simple language of Scripture, interpreted by a humble spirit, presents so few difficulties, either practical or doctrinal.

But, in this respect, the fathers of the council of Trent only pursued a method of discussion which would have been adopted by the theologians of any age, church, or sect. We cannot follow them through the labyrinths of the debate; but the first proposition was unanimously declared heretical, according to the decisions of the various councils which were held on the doctrines of Pelagius. The second proposition shared a similar fate. Of the third article, the former part was condemned because it spoke of the contempt of God, and other crimes of a similar nature, as original sin, whereas this species of guilt is not to be found in infants, nor in all grown persons; and to describe original sin in this manner, therefore, was, in fact, to deny its existence. The second part of the same proposition was

* Fra Paoli, t. i. liv. ii. p. 308.

spoken of as in one sense to be tolerated, but in another as heretical. "If the protestants," it was said, "when speaking of the universal corruption of man, mean only a privative corruption, they may be right; but they seem to understand the doctrine as implying a total and substantial corruption, and pointing to human nature as existing now under a form different to that in which it was created. The catholics designated original sin as the privation of justice, a fountain without water; but the protestants said that it was a living source, whence sprang the corrupted waters of disbelief, hatred, contumacy, and all other worldly feelings and desires. Such being the case, the proposition was condemned, and the fourth article was united with it as equally heretical and dangerous. The only opponent to this decision was the learned theologian Catharin, who plainly declared that none of the arguments advanced seemed sufficient for the purpose of confuting the supposed heresy. He was answered by Dominic Soto, a rigid adherent to the opinions of Thomas Aquinas; and the council seemed on the point of dividing, when its attention was called to the fifth article, about which there was less danger of discussion. It was unanimously agreed, in the debate on this proposition, that original sin is effaced by baptism, which restores the soul to its first state of innocency, the punishment of the sin remaining as a trial and exercise; that the perfection of Adam was a quality which adorned and perfected the soul, rendering it acceptable in the sight of God, and freeing the body from mortality: that God, for Christ's sake, gives to those who are born again a new quality, which is called justifying grace, and which, purifying the soul from the taint of sin, restores it to the state in which Adam was before the fall, and produces even a higher degree of goodness than original justice; with this reservation only, that the body is left in the condition to which sin at first subjected it.

The sixth and seventh articles were both declared

heretical : the eighth, which was founded on some loose expressions of Augustin, badly understood, excited a still stronger opposition. On the ninth proposition, the debate was carried to some length, Augustin and his party employing the words of Scripture to support the opinion that original sin will be punished with fire ; and the contrary party, including the celebrated Peter Lombard, and most of the scholastics, contending that the only penalty awarded it will be a denial of glory.

It might have been supposed, that with the termination of the debate the members of the council would have found themselves relieved from a considerable part of the embarrassment in which they seemed involved by the intricacies of the subject. But, instead of this being the case, they only saw fresh difficulties surrounding them ; and the prelates, to whom ought properly to have pertained the task of drawing up the decree, proved themselves as incompetent to decide on a question purely theological, as they were eager to secure the advancement of their temporal interests. The legates trembled at the delay which thus took place at a period when it was the wish of the pope that the decision of the question should be expedited. Toledo, on the other hand, wishing to obtain time for the furtherance of his own plans, saw the confusion which prevailed with secret satisfaction.* At length some appearance of unity was restored, the leaders of the assembly again having recourse to the common watchword of the council — the ruin of the protestants. The decrees were then put in form for publication. Under the head of original sin, were comprised five anathemas, the first four of which were directed against the Lutherans, and the last against the followers of Zuingle. On these the consent of the fathers was unanimous ; but

* The most distinguished opponent of the decision of the majority on this occasion, was Ambrose Catharin. He was at one time near carrying away the palm of victory, and his address contains the substance of all that was said in defence of the first three articles. He stated, — “ Qu’il falloit distinguer le péché d’avec sa peine : Que la concupiscence et la privation de la justice étoient la peine du péché : Qu’il falloit donc nécessairement que le péché fut autre chose : Qu’il est impossible, que ce qui n’a point été

as nothing could persuade either the one party or the other, who had disputed on the immaculate nature of

péché en Adam le soit en nous : Que la concupiscence et la privation de la justice n'avoient point été péché en Adam, puisqu'elles n'étoient point les actions d'Adam, et qu'à plus forte raison elles ne pouvoient être péché en nous ; et comme elles n'avoient été en lui que l'effet du péché, elles ne devoient être en nous que la même chose : Que par la même raison on ne pouvoit pas dire, que le péché soit une inimitié de Dieu contre le pécheur, ni du pécheur contre Dieu, parceque toutes ces choses ne sont que des suites du péché, et qu'elles sont venues après lui. Il attaqua de même cette transmission du péché par le moyen de la semence et de la génération, en disant, que comme si Adam n'eût point péché, la justice ne se seroit pas transmise à sa postérité par la génération, mais par la volonté de Dieu ; il falloit chercher un autre moyen d'expliquer la transfusion du péché ; ce qu'il fit de cette manière. Il dit, que comme Dieu, quand il établit Abraham le *Pere des Croyans*, avoit fait un pacte avec lui et sa postérité ; de même quand il donna la justice originelle à Adam et au genre-humain, notre premier père s'engagea en son nom et en celui de ses descendans de la conserver pour lui et pour eux, en observant le précepte qu'il avoit reçu ; au lieu que faute de l'observer il la perdroit autant pour eux que pour lui-même, et les rendroit sujets aux mêmes peines, sa transgression étant devenue celle de chacun, en lui comme cause, et dans les autres comme la suite du pacte contracté pour eux : Qu'ainsi la même transgression qui étoit en lui un péché actuel, fait dans les autres le péché originel par l'imputation qui leur en est faite, et que c'est ainsi que tout le monde a péché en lui lorsqu'il a péché. *Catharin* fondeoit principalement son opinion sur ce qu'il ne peut y avoir proprement de véritable péché s'il n'y a point d'acte de la volonté, et qu'il ne peut y avoir rien de volontaire dans le péché originel quel' imputation de la transgression d'Adam à tous ; puisque quand S. Paul dit, *que tous ont péché en Adam*, on ne peut entendre autre chose, sinon qu'ils ont commis le même péché avec lui. Il rapporta pour exemple ce qu'écrivit S. Paul aux Hébreux, que Levi avoit payé la dixme à Melchisédech, quand Abraham son bisayeul la lui paya ; et que par la même raison on peut dire, que la postérité d'Adam a violé l'ordre de Dieu, quand Adam le viola lui-même, et qu'elle a péché en lui, comme elle auroit reçu la justice en lui : qu'ainsi il n'étoit pas nécessaire de recourir au plaisir sensuel qui infecte la chair, et dont l'infection se communique à l'ame ; étant impossible de concevoir qu'un esprit puisse recevoir une affection corporelle : Que si le péché est une tache spirituelle dans l'ame, elle ne peut pas être auparavant dans la chair ; et si c'est une tache corporelle dans la chair, elle ne peut rien opérer sur l'esprit : Qu'enfin il étoit impossible de concevoir, qu'une ame, pour se joindre à un corps corrompu, contractât elle-même l'infection du corps. Pour prouver ensuite le pacte de Dieu avec Adam, il se servit d'un passage du prophète *Osée*, d'un autre de *l'Ecclesiastique*, et de plusieurs endroits de *S. Augustin*. Il montra aussi, que le péché originel de chacun est l'acte seul de la transgression d'Adam ; il le montra, dis-je, par un endroit où S. Paul dit, *que plusieurs ont été faits pécheurs par la desobéissance d'un seul* ; et parce qu'on n'a jamais cru dans l'église, que le péché soit autre chose qu'une action volontaire contre la Loi ; et qu'il n'y a eu d'autre action volontaire que celle d'Adam. Il se servit encore pour prouver la même chose d'un autre endroit, où S. Paul dit que c'est *par le péché originel que la mort est entrée dans le monde*, quoiqu'elle n'y soit entrée que par la transgression actuelle d'Adam. Enfin il tira une de ses principales preuves, de ce que quoiqu' Eve eût mangé avant Adam du fruit défendu, elle ne reconnut point sa nudité, et ne souffrit aucune peine, avant qu'Adam eût péché lui-même. D'où il conclut que le péché d'Adam fut non seulement son péché propre, mais encore celui d'Eve et de toute sa postérité." — *Fra Paoli, Hist. du Con. T. t. x. p. 312.*

This address was censured by Dominic Soto, who taking up the arguments of Thomas Aquinas, replied : — "Qu'Adam pécha actuellement en man-

Christ's conception, to yield its dogmas, the legates proposed that the matter should be left undecided; and the archbishop of Aix desired that an order might be passed, prohibiting any further mention of the point in dispute, either on the one side or the other.

At the opening of the fifth session, the decree above named was read in a full assembly of the members; and immediately after, the decree of reformation. This document, so highly interesting and important, was divided into two parts. In the former, provision was made for the better and more general teaching of theology, by an order to the bishops, that they should oblige those who enjoyed revenues, set apart for this purpose, to perform the duty which pertained to their appointments, either in their own person, or by deputies properly qualified for the task, and appointed by the bishop of the diocese. It was further ordained, that, for the future, no person should be appointed to benefices of this kind who were not sufficiently learned to exercise the office of theological professors: that in places where no provision had hitherto been made for this purpose, the first prebend which fell vacant should be devoted to the institution of a divinity lecture: that, if no

geant du fruit défendu; mais qu'il demeura pécheur par une disposition habituelle produite par l'action: Que tel est d'ordinaire le fruit des actions mauvaises, qui produisent dans l'ame de ceux qui les commettent une disposition, qui fait qu'après l'acte ils demeurent pécheurs et en conservent le nom: Que l'action d'Adam fut une action passagère, qui n'eut d'être qu'au moment qu'elle fut produite; mais que la qualité habituelle qui lui en resta passa à sa postérité, et est devenue propre à chacun à qui elle a été transmise: Que cette action d'Adam n'est point le péché originel, et qu'il n'est autre que cette habitude qui a suivi de l'action, et que les théologiens appellent la privation de la justice: Que l'on peut expliquer cela en considérant que l'homme est appelé pécheur non seulement dans le tems qu'il pèche actuellement, mais encore après, tant que le péché n'est point effacé; et cela non point à cause des peines ou des autres suites du péché, mais uniquement par rapport à la transgression précédente; de même que l'homme qui devient courbé est appelé tel tant qu'il ne se redresse point, non à cause de l'action actuelle, mais à cause de l'effet qui en reste après que l'action est passée. Puis comparant le péché originel à cette courbure, comme véritablement c'en est une spirituelle, *Soto* dit, que comme toute la nature humaine étoit en Adam, quand il se courba en violant le commandement de Dieu, tout le genre-humain, et par conséquent chaque individu particulier, est demeuré courbé, non point de la courbure d'Adam, mais de la courbure qui lui est propre, et qui le fait rester courbé, et pécheur, tant qu'il n'est point redressé par la grace. Ces deux opinions furent soutenues avec une chaleur égale de part et d'autre, chacun voulant faire adopter la sienne par le Synode." — *Ibid.* p. 314.

prebend existed which could be thus employed, some simple benefice should be taken ; and that, if this did not produce sufficient income, the deficiency should be made up by the neighbouring incumbents. In regard to the poorer churches, it was added, that the bishop, with the advice of the chapter, should appoint at least one master to teach grammar gratuitously to the young clergy, and other poor scholars, that they might thereby be prepared for the study of divinity when it should please God to call them to his service. Like the professors of theology, the grammar master was to be provided for by some church benefice ; and we cannot but admire the wisdom of the whole of this plan for diffusing knowledge through the Christian community. All that was needed to render it efficient, to make it fertile in blessings to the church and the people, was a wise regulation as to the studies to be pursued ; the change, in short, of dry grammatical institutes, for the invigorating exercises of thought pursuing substantial knowledge, and sanctified and supported by copious draughts from those fountains of wisdom that are ever welling forth from the oracles of God. Some approach was made to scriptural instruction in the directions given respecting the reading of the Bible in monasteries and convents ; both bishops and princes being exhorted to enforce the ordinance as necessary to the present and eternal welfare of their people. But had this command been issued with that attention to the circumstances of the case which it deserved, how unlikely it is that the Bible would have been for so many ages after denied to the people by the church of Rome, or that every attempt to make it accessible to the humble inquirer should have been treated as the forerunner of heresy or schism.

The second part of this decree, so valuable to the historian, and so creditable to those by whom it was drawn up and passed, treats of the duty of public preaching.* Bishops and archbishops, it is said, are

* Fleury, l. cxliii. n. 42. — Fra Paoli.

bound by their office to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, if not prevented by some particular cause ; and when this is the case, it is their duty to provide pious and learned men to supply their place. Curates, in the same manner, are exhorted, unless hindered by sufficient reasons, to preach to the people on Sundays and festivals ; but the members of the monastic orders are prohibited, in the strongest terms, from preaching without permission from the bishop. The difficulties arising from the collision of these two powerful rivals in the Roman church have been already alluded to. They appeared on almost every question of importance, and were now only subdued by its being suggested, that whenever a bishop interfered in the affairs of a monastery, he was to perform his duty, not in virtue of his prelatical authority, but as the delegate of Rome.

A congregation was summoned on the 21st of the month, to consider the doctrine of justification, and the supposed heresies of the reformers. Several theologians having been ordered to put the subject into a form which would most readily admit of its being discussed, the divines thus chosen reduced the numerous questions it involved to twenty-five propositions. The first of these articles propounded, that faith alone, to the exclusion of works, suffices for salvation : the second, that justifying faith is the confidence whereby we believe that our sins are forgiven us for Christ's sake ; and that those who are justified must believe that their sins are forgiven. The third proposition unfolds the opinion, that faith alone renders us acceptable to God, who takes no notice of good works ; that by it men are purified and made worthy of receiving the eucharist : the fourth, that they who do good without the Holy Spirit, sin, because they do it with an unsanctified heart ; and that even the observing of the commandments of God is sin, unless it be done by faith : the fifth, that true penitence is a new life ; that repentance for past sins is not necessary ; and that contrition for present offences does not dispose the heart to receive grace : the sixth,

that a fit disposition is not necessary to justification ; and that faith justifies, not because it inclines a man to good, but because it is the means and instrument whereby the grace of God is seized and apprehended.*

These are some of the propositions which the council was about to examine, under the head of doctrine. The reformation of abuses seemed on the point of making another advance, by the proposal of the cardinal del Monte to enforce the constant residence of bishops and pastors on their respective cures. It was owing to their non-residence, he said, that the evils which at present threatened the church had made such an alarming progress ; that heresies and corruption prevailed among the people, since they whose duty it was to watch over their conditions, and prevent the approach of the enemy of souls, were so rarely at their station. To the same cause, he further observed, might be ascribed the frequent admission of the most unworthy or the most unqualified persons to the ministry ; and that if the mischief which hence occurred was to be removed, it could only be effected by enforcing in the strictest manner the law of residence.

The truth and good sense of these remarks were obvious ; and the speakers who followed confirmed what the cardinal had stated, by their own experience. A Florentine bishop endeavoured to show that the obtrusion of the mendicant and other orders of preachers had so destroyed the authority of the prelates, that they might as well be in a strange country as in their dioceses ; but his objection only tended to establish the general argument, for it might have been asked whether the influence of the preaching friars was not almost entirely owing to their finding the field deserted by those who should have tilled it themselves. The legates, pressed on both sides, agreed that the subject should be discussed ; and thus, two of the most important inquiries that could have been instituted were prepared for the coming assembly.

* Fleury.

A wide range of argument was taken in the discussion of the theological questions respecting justification. Neither learning nor acuteness was wanting among the disputants ; but they were swayed, it is suspected, by other motives than a simple love of truth. The spirit of party reigned supreme in the council. An imperialist would not willingly yield any point to the supporters of the pope ; nor the supporters of the pope to those who regarded the interests of the church itself as the only object to be sought. This state of things demanded the continual interference of the legates ; and whenever they interposed their authority, the freedom of debate ceased, and the inquiry after truth became lost in the consideration of what would be most pleasing to the Roman court. A more distressing spectacle can scarcely be presented to a pious or ingenuous mind. There was enough of knowledge, good sense, and earnest feeling among the members of this celebrated council to make it a blessing to the church at large ; but, as in every case where a church has lost its apostolic purity, the defence of the church destroyed the means which might have been so profitably employed for the defence of the Gospel.

CHAP. XVII.

DIET OF RATISBONNE. — PREPARATIONS OF THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR FOR WAR. — MEASURES OF THE PROTESTANTS. — THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY AND THE LANDGRAVE OF HESSE PREPARE FOR A CAMPAIGN. — THE WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. — COUNCIL OF TRENT.

WHILE the fathers of the council of Trent were thus deeply engaged in endeavouring to settle the doctrine and discipline of the church, the pope and the emperor adopted a line of policy which would shake Europe to its centre. Neither the one nor the other appears to have entertained a thought of inquiring by what means the happiness of mankind could be best promoted. They were both despots; both men of calculating minds; proud, selfish, and ever apprehensive of some change of events, that might at once hurl them from the eminence which they guarded with such jealous care.

The diet met at Ratisbonne early in the summer, and the intentions of Charles became too apparent to allow the protestants to indulge any longer a hope of safety. It was impossible for them to regard the council of Trent in the light of an assembly whose decisions would be binding on the consciences of Christians studious of framing their belief and practice according to the rule of Scripture. This they represented to the emperor in the strong and earnest language of men who had taken a path from which nothing could induce them to recede. "Let the subjects," said they, "on which we feel so deeply, be examined in a free German council: let them be discussed even in a

diet of the empire ; or in a meeting of learned and conscientious theologians ; but do not leave us to be judged by an assembly in which it is impossible, by its very constitution, that justice should be done us."

Such a remonstrance was little agreeable to the emperor. He saw that a feeling reigned among the protestants, which was neither to be overcome by the most cautious policy, nor to be surprised by the most daring. The elector of Saxony, as the head of the party, was the first to experience his resentment. His letters to that virtuous prince were couched in terms of bitter reproach ; and only the blindest of men could have failed to discover in the whole bearing of the emperor and his ministers, that the sword was already more than half out of the scabbard. The circumstance that peace had been made with France, and a truce entered into with the Turk, augmented the suspicions of the protestants ; and, when it was heard that the cardinal of Trent had been dispatched post to Rome, to claim the assistance of the pope, the last lingering doubt vanished, and they were obliged to own, that the time had arrived in which they were either to be martyred in mass, give up their faith, or arm themselves for its defence.

To the inquiries of those who ventured to question Charles respecting his hostile preparations, he simply answered, that he only desired to establish peace in the empire ; that those who were willing to obey his mandates might depend on his friendship ; but that he would now use his power to put down the authors of trouble and dissension. The landgrave of Hesse, never loth to appear as the champion of his party, lost no time in making arrangements for the war thus suddenly announced. Full of zeal and energy himself, he endeavoured to inspire the other protestant princes with a similar feeling. But so specious had been the assurances of the emperor and Ferdinand, that they desired nothing more earnestly than peace, that the

* Sleidan. *Fra Paoli*, t. ii. liv. ii. Pallavicini, lib. viii., c. 1.

deputies at Ratisbonne lent an unwilling ear to these exhortations of the landgrave. The constant movement of troops in Germany and Italy roused them from their dream of security. With the promptitude of an honest patriotism, the cities of Upper Germany, and the duke of Wirtemberg, lost no time in communicating intelligence to the chiefs of the league; and, following up their counsel by actions, instantly led into the field a small but resolute band of infantry.

The troops, thus promptly raised, were led by gentlemen of high birth and character. When fairly ready for action, Balthasar Gultling, counsellor of the duke of Wirtemberg, addressed them in a speech well fitted to animate the courage of men who came forward neither as warriors nor as rebels, but as the subjects of free princes, resolved to defend their independence, and the safety of their homes and altars. "The Roman pontiff, the vicar of Satan," said he, "again dreams of devastating Germany with the scourge of war: he seeks revenge for what our countrymen did when they sacked and pillaged Rome; and his mortal hatred to true religion urges him on to attempt our final ruin. At his instigation, the emperor Charles takes up arms against our princes and those allied with them in a holy confederation, that he may force us by violence to the practice of a religion impious and diabolical. Yes! this proud and wicked slave of Satan, has himself equipped a body of infantry and cavalry to aid the forces of the emperor. Spanish regiments also are already in the country; and we may hourly look for the horrors which will inundate the land when these foreign bands receive the signal for action. Our princes, therefore, and their allies, knowing it to be a solemn duty to protect their subjects from violence, and, above all, to save them, if possible, from the seductions of a false religion, have resolved, by the grace of God, to act as men and Christians; and, notwithstanding any further promises and persuasions, to commence hostilities. Hence it is that they have

called you into the field. Obey the chief set over you ! show yourselves worthy of the ancestors of your race ! and, for the rest, we will resign ourselves to the will of the Almighty, in whose righteousness we trust for the decision of our cause." *

Activity prevailed on both sides. The protestants, on their part, lost no time in calling for the aid of the neighbouring states. Venice and the Tyrolese were intreated to oppose the passage of the papal troops through their fortresses: the noblemen and free cities which had not yet joined the confederacy, received invitations to unite themselves with the defenders of religious freedom ; and an ambassador was sent into Switzerland, where it might well be hoped many thousands would be found ready to support a cause so similar to their own.

The pope, in the mean time, concluded a formal treaty with Charles, by which he promised to furnish 100,000 crowns of gold, in addition to the sum of like amount already advanced ; to permit the emperor to levy half the revenue of the ecclesiastical possessions in Spain, and to sell as much of the property of the monasteries in that country as would amount to 500,000 gold crowns.† He further agreed, to send 12,000 infantry, and 500 cavalry, ready equipped into the field, and to maintain them for six months ; the grand condition on which the whole was granted being this ; that the troops and the money should be religiously devoted to war against the heretics, and to the compelling of all those who rejected the council, and took part in the new errors, to renounce the same, and return to the profession of the ancient faith.

It is impossible to pass over the mention of these events without an expression of astonishment at the daring dishonesty of the pontiff's conduct. The pro-

* * Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xvii. p. 324.

† The cardinals, it is said, did not approve of this mode of providing for the war. They might well, indeed, dissent from such a proposal. The wonder is, how Paul III. dare venture on such an attempt to increase his resources. *Ibid.*

testants had for years been demanding the fair examination of their views in a free and general council. A council was called, which wanted the essential features of an assembly, in which a controversy like that now pending could be satisfactorily determined. The objections of the protestants were disregarded ; and the council commenced its sittings. But, though convened in contempt of the reformers, though disallowing their right to call for the judgment of a tribunal otherwise constituted, it does not appear that the assembly ever supposed itself summoned merely to decide a question already answered, or to act as if it had no other duty to perform than that of pronouncing condemnation on one of the parties whose quarrel was the object of its consideration. The very mode and character of its debates prove that the contrary was the case ; that the subjects on which it had to decide were still matters of controversy ; and that it was possible that the termination of the debate might not always be on the side of the pope. On questions both of doctrine and discipline did this doubtfulness properly remain till the formal summoning up of the several decrees. If the council had even the shadow of freedom, or any pretensions whatever to the dignity and authority possessed by the assemblies, on the model of which it was supposed to be formed, it might speak of the same things, and finally decide on the same principles, as the protestants. The privileges of the pope himself could not be rightly considered as wholly out of the view of such a body : the revenues of the church, its rites and discipline ; the state of the clergy, every thing, in short, inquiry into which had given birth to protestantism, was to be subject to its investigation.

What then, may we ask, can be thought of the conduct of the pope, or of his ally the emperor, when they could dare, while such an assembly was sitting, to meditate the destruction of those, the proceedings and opinions of whom were the subject of its solemn deliberations ? It surely cannot be said, that they deserved this fate, because they refused to appear at the council.

Supposing even they had been guilty of contumacy by this conduct, still the offence had not been determined by the assembly, which now alone had authority to say what was the penalty due to such a dissent. The meditated attack, in fact, would at any time have been unlawful ; but it was now a sacrilege, and was no other than the iniquity of a prince giving secret orders for the assassination of a person accused of treason, while it is yet undetermined by the judges whether that which is laid to his charge have any thing of treason in its nature.

Seizing the moment which yet remained before the actual commencement of hostilities, the elector palatine endeavoured to avert the danger by mediation. The only statement which he could make to the protestant princes, after communicating with the emperor, implied the necessity of their entirely humbling themselves to his power. " His majesty," said he, " will speak of peace if you ask for pardon in that in which you have offended ; if you will offer to restore whatever you may have taken from others, and to redress any injury inflicted against the laws of justice."*

The elector of Saxony and the Landgrave proved how little they regarded an answer of this kind, by immediately preparing for the field. In their address to the emperor, justifying the measures which they were thus compelled to adopt, they boldly accused him of a want of good faith in acting in a manner so contrary to what might have been expected from his previous behaviour. Passing then to a review of the few past years, they proved how loyal had been their conduct ; how little they merited the accusations heaped upon them ; and how greatly, on the other hand, he must have forgotten the solemn oath which he took at his coronation. " We leave," said they in conclusion, " our interests in the hand of God ; and when you shall have informed us precisely of what we are guilty, we will then prove our innocence so clearly that the injustice

* Pallavic. lib. ix. c. iii. Sleidan.

of this attack shall be manifest to all the world ; and it will be seen that it is perpetrated at the instigation of the Roman antichrist, and the impious council of Trent."

The landgrave of Hesse now put his troops in motion to meet the enemy on his descent from the Alps. Sebastian Schertelin had, in the mean time, made himself master of the strongest fortress in the valley of the Tyrol, and was on his way to Inspruck, when the forces of Ferdinand gathering together on all sides against him, obliged him to retreat. The emperor himself remained at Ratisbonne, where an army of eight thousand infantry, Germans and Spaniards, and seven hundred horse, awaited his command to march. He was not, however, idle. On the 20th of July, he published the ban of the empire against the elector of Saxony and the landgrave. The document purported, that these two princes had at all times opposed themselves to his plans for the good of the empire ; had disobeyed his orders ; invited others to do the same ; and, under the pretence of religion, carried on designs of ambition fatal to the happiness of the state. " Their rebellion," continued the emperor, " being thus manifest, I proscribe them as perfidious rebels, as guilty of *lèse majesté*, and disturbers of the public safety. I am moreover resolved to punish these rebels, and forbid any one to join them under pain of death, and confiscation of goods."*

On the banks of the Danube the protestant chiefs awaited the further movement of the indignant sovereign. His arrival at Landshut, on the Iser, gave them an opportunity of again addressing him, before striking the first blow. " You attack by your proceedings," said they, " not only the Gospel, but the law and liberty of the empire ; nor can you forget that you have for many years past been in constant communication with the Roman antichrist and foreign princes, in order to form against us an alliance which might finally lead to our subjection. And now, concealing the true object of

* Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xviii. p. 351.

this war, you pretend that it is not in a religious struggle that you take up arms, but for the purpose of punishing a rebellion. But have you not proved this to be false, by allowing the pope to hold a council composed only of his creatures, and from which the few who ventured to express their opinions honestly were instantly expelled? Had we, indeed, been guilty of any crime, it would have been your duty to call us before an assembly of princes, according to the example of your ancestors. Instead of doing this, you have acted in a manner as unworthy of your own honour as it is injurious to us. While summoning us to the diet, and while even consulting with us there, you have taken measures to attack us in open war; even entering into a truce with the Turks, that you might turn against us the weapons hitherto employed only for the destruction of infidels. You say that you wish well to the propagation of the Gospel; but how does this assertion agree with the decrees of the university of Louvain, confirmed by your authority; or with the punishments which you have allowed to fall on the heads of those who, in various parts of your dominions, have professed the reformed doctrines? Does it not all prove, that you have been in close alliance with the Roman antichrist; that it is your wish to extinguish the light of scriptural truth, and to re-establish the power of the papacy, with all its attendant corruptions?"

The arrival of the pontifical forces, to the amount of 10,000 infantry and 500 cavaliers, and soon after that of 600 veteran Spaniards from Milan and Naples, under the command of Philip de Lanoy, placed the emperor in a formidable position for commencing the attack, and taking vengeance on the protestant chiefs for the resolute manner in which they braved his menaces. It was not till after careful deliberation that the latter had determined on the steps to be first taken. The result of their consultations was a hasty march towards Ratisbonne; and thither they were soon after followed by the emperor, at the head of his now numerous army; but

suddenly changing his route, he took the road to Ingoldstadt, and arrived there in time to surprise and defeat a party of the landgrave's troops, who, ignorant of his entry into the town, had approached to reconnoitre its position.

Having succeeded in making themselves masters of a height above the town, the leaders of the protestants planted a formidable line of artillery along the brow of the eminence, and the word only was needed to hurl destruction into the camp of the emperor. The landgrave strongly urged the wisdom of losing no time in commencing the attack; and it is conjectured, that, had his advice been taken, it would have given the confederates an advantage of which no present movement of the enemy could have deprived them: but his associates in the war were neither so bold nor so skilful as himself. The counsel he gave was overruled by the timid maxims of a seeming prudence; and the emperor escaped from a danger to which his military experience prevented his being again exposed.

The protestant chiefs having discovered their error when it was too late to recover the favourable moment for attack, left the position above Ingoldstadt to meet the portion of the imperial army which was said to be approaching under the command of the count de Bure. No circumstance of importance attended this movement, and it was not till the 3d of October that the two armies found themselves sufficiently near each other to promise any decisive encounter. They were now in the neighbourhood of Nordlingen, and an engagement being almost inevitable, the protestant leaders immediately put their forces in order of battle; but neither party was willing to risk the first attack, and after looking at each for some time, both the one and the other retired into its encampments.

With no partner in command, whose wishes or opinions could retard the promptitude of his decisions, the emperor was always prepared to execute a movement

the instant a favourable opportunity presented itself for action. Thus he rapidly made himself master of the several towns along the Danube which offered the best safeguard to his future movements ; and when the allies came up to him on the 13th of October, they found him encamped in the neighbourhood of Donauwerth. Surprised at their unexpected approach, he again stood exposed for a moment to their attack ; but the want of decision once more deprived the confederates of a triumph so near being gained, and the armies remained inactive.

But while so little was effected on the field occupied by the emperor and the heads of the protestant confederacy, important events were taking place in other parts of the country. It was the policy of Charles to attempt that by counsel which he could not so readily or safely secure by arms. The dominions of the elector of Saxony had been declared confiscated ; and the ties of friendship or relationship not often binding the consciences of princes, Charles at once conceived the possibility of persuading Maurice, duke of Saxony, to take possession of the forfeited territory, and render him in return all the assistance which such a sudden elevation to dignity might entitle his benefactor to demand. Maurice hesitated for a time to accept the proposal. He recollected the close union which had existed between his parent and the elector of Saxony ; the instances of kindness which he had himself experienced at his hands ; the benevolence and Christian piety of the prince ; and whenever these considerations seemed to admit of an answer, and the subtle representations of the emperor made it appear that the elector had been guilty of rebellion, which ought to break the closest ties of private amity, there still remained a difficulty to be overcome in the mind of Maurice. The elector was beloved by his subjects, and the cause of holiness was little less dear to them than it was to their prince. How then would they submit to see his place occupied by one who accepted it at the hand of a potentate, whose grand object it was to destroy their pretensions to religious free-

dom ; to undo all that had been done in the country for the restoring of truth ; and to bring back the ministers of a church, to whose long-continued influence might be ascribed that state of darkness from which it was so greatly their boast to have escaped ?

These considerations had their due weight for some time on the mind of the prince ; but the emperor had an argument in reserve, which the moment he began to waver, was applied with such skill that the few lingering doubts of conscience and honourable feeling quickly vanished. The forfeiture of the elector's states had placed them, it was represented, at the disposal of his imperial majesty, who now offered them to the branch of the family which stood next in succession. Should this offer be refused on the part of the favoured prince, they would probably fall into the hand of a stranger, and he would have to lament the alienation of dominions which had for ages belonged to his ancient and powerful house. This consideration prevailed ; and, after some discussion as to the terms on which the states were to be received, Maurice consented to accept the grant, as far as it was in the power of the emperor to afford it.

The affair thus settled between Charles and the prince, the latter wrote to the elector to acquaint him with the state of affairs, and to apologise for the part which he had taken. “ You have doubtless been informed,” said he, “ of the orders which I have received from the emperor. That sovereign having desired me to take possession of your states, I have obeyed his mandate, but not till he gave me full assurance on the article of religion, that he would not interfere with the liberty which the people have so long enjoyed. It is by the advice of my friends that I take this step to preserve my rights, and prevent the danger of our seeing the electorate pass into the hands of strangers. If, moreover, affairs should not continue in their present melancholy state, and you should one day be reconciled with the emperor, and king Ferdinand, I

will not refuse, if those princes give consent, to bring the whole affair before the states for their final adjudication of our respective rights."

Such was another of the consequences of a war fomented by the arts, and only engaged in, to promote the vindictive purposes, of a corrupt church. The generous minded landgrave beheld with equal sorrow and alarm the position of his ally. His first impulse was to write to Maurice himself, on whom he urged all the arguments which reason and honourable feeling could suggest, to persuade him to desist from so disgraceful an enterprise. "Remember," he said, "the conduct of your uncle duke George; the nature of his last testament; and how much you owe to the generosity and firmness of the protestants. Can you have forgotten that they promised you a pension, provided by themselves, if the time should ever come, when, out of hatred to your faith, your uncle should deprive you of support?" *

The landgrave next addressed the princes and free towns on behalf of the elector; calling upon them for immediate help, and showing how fearfully the cause of religious liberty must suffer, if the defence of the electorate was not provided for without the necessity of breaking up the army now engaged against the emperor. In these addresses the landgrave was joined by the counsellors of war; and no argument remained unemployed to convince the allies of Saxony, that, if the elector was left to ruin, their own would speedily be effected by the same intolerance and cruelty.

Ferdinand, while these efforts were being made on the part of the protestant chiefs, was bearing down upon the country, thus marked for ruin, with a large body of troops from Bohemia. Alarm every where prevailed. The people saw themselves about to be made the victims of a tyranny against which, they had hoped, the wisdom of their ancestors, and the constitution of the empire, would always effectually preserve

* Sleidan.

them. Those who were comparatively indifferent to religion, had ample reason to dread the ruin of their worldly interests ; while the rest, and they were probably at this time the greater number, beheld in the coming storm not only the irreparable injury of their prosperity and social interests, but the undoing of that noble work in which they had so lately rejoiced, not only for their own sakes, but for the prospect which it presented of good to generations yet unborn.

It required little exercise of military skill to take possession of a country in so defenceless a state as the dominions of the elector at this time. Most of the towns opened their gates to Maurice and his allies, without attempting resistance. The grossest enormities were perpetrated by the troops who ravaged the country. Blood flowed where even the necessity of war demanded no sacrifice ; and the wretched people saw their homes violated by savages, set on to defend the rights of an infallible Christian bishop.

The affairs of the confederates presented on all sides the most gloomy aspect. Already was their venerable leader stripped of his dominions, his people ruined, and the safety of their religion left to the mercy of the conqueror. Things wore no better appearance in the field. With an ardent desire to do all that brave men could do, the troops of the confederates had not yet gained a single success which might serve to animate hope, and stimulate to farther efforts. The emperor, on the other hand, fired by the prospect of their speedy ruin, looked proudly and almost contemptuously at their movements ; and, putting himself more than once in positions where they might have attacked him with certainty of success, escaped from their hands as if he could measure exactly the counterbalancing influences of the landgrave's impetuosity, and the elector's caution.

But winter was now fast approaching, and the protestant leaders plainly saw that they could not, without the ruin of their cause, allow things to remain in their present state. At a meeting of the deputies, therefore,

in the camp at Giengen, it was fairly confessed, that one or the other of these resolutions must be adopted and acted upon without delay: namely, to force an engagement, and stake all on its issue, or to send the soldiers into quarters, and retire till the spring; or to sue for peace.*

The last of these propositions was adopted, and the emperor received intimation of the feeling which prevailed in the camp of the protestants. Had he been sincere in his original professions on the subject, he would not have wished to take any further advantage of events, than that of securing by his success the tranquillity of the country: he would have done nothing which savoured of vengeance; would have sought no increase of his own authority; nor acted in any other way than an arbiter, who asserted a right to arbitrate, and had been unfortunately obliged to establish that right by arms. But, instead of showing a generous inclination to reconcile conflicting views and interests, he demanded sacrifices which he knew could not be granted by men of honour and spirit. The confederates, therefore, were compelled to make provision for continuing the war; and, as they saw little reason to hope for any efficient aid from their allies nearer home, they resolved on addressing themselves to the kings of France and England, who, being now at peace with each other, were in a condition to undertake any enterprise which might promise them an accession of glory or influence. There being no hopes of peace, and it seeming unwise in the present state of the army to attempt a battle, the only alternative which remained was to send the troops into winter quarters. The several divisions, accordingly, began their march towards the district assigned for this purpose. At the close of day, orders were given to halt; and the soldiers prepared themselves for repose. But, instead of taking their position with the main body of the army, the elector of Saxony and the landgrave ascended a hill at

* Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xviii. p. 385.

some distance, and contented themselves with retaining around them a part of the cavalry and artillery. The emperor, narrowly watching the movements of the enemy, followed them with his whole army, and by night-fall came close to the position occupied by the incautious chiefs. But, as they had reason on some former occasions to blame their own want of decision, so had they cause on this to rejoice in finding the emperor guilty of a similar error. Instead of attacking their little force, he waited for the return of morning, that he might be the better able to estimate their strength. Before, however, he commenced his march, they were on their way to the general rendezvous; and the discovery of the danger from which they had escaped, lightened for the time the melancholy which had begun to prevail in their ranks.

A. D. 1547. The struggle was continued with no appearance of change in favour of the confederates; and the unfortunate elector found himself on the borders of his territory, less like a prince contending for the liberty of his people at the head of an army, than an exile at the gate of his home, preparing to reproach the intruder on his hearth with the basest crimes of treachery and ingratitude. "I have purposely deferred," said he, in his letter to the ministers of state, "answering your communication to me in the month of October. It was my wish to see what time would bring forth. What has happened is well known; but, considering the relationship and alliance which exist between us, and the obligations which your prince has incurred at my hands, I expected not such treatment either from you or from him; little could I have thought, that I and my people should be thus persecuted through his ambition, and much less did I ever suspect that you would consent to aid in a project which is so likely to prove the ruin both of yourselves and of your country. The treachery of your prince afflicts me so much the more, seeing that in his letters to me he has expressed the same friendship as I have ever felt for him. Can I, moreover,

be insensible to the miseries heaped on my subjects by his proceedings? how many families have been rendered desolate by the barbarities of the hordes he has introduced into the land! how have the churches been deprived of their ministers, and every class and order in the country made to feel the miseries of war! The pretext for seizing my states is the command of the emperor, and the urgent desire of Ferdinand: but ought not the ties of blood, of duty and alliance, to be preferred to their edicts? Till the subject of religion gave rise to disputes, the most perfect harmony existed between the emperor, Ferdinand, and myself; and all the crimes and errors which have since been imputed to me were till then unknown. But, if these things were indeed ordered by the emperor, ought you not to have been fired with indignation at receiving such commands? Should you not have inquired whether it was lawful for your prince to obey an injunction so destitute of reason — so opposed to truth and justice? Yes! you carried into the council-chamber minds corrupted by passion, and the desire of possessing my dominions has blinded both you and your prince to every maxim of justice: had it been otherwise, you could not have failed to see that, condemned as we have been unheard, our proscription is contrary to all the laws, the conventions, and every rule of right, which the emperor by a solemn oath has bound himself to preserve inviolate. Maurice himself would have seen this; but he has followed the example of the impious Doeg (1 Kings, xxii. 1.), and endeavours to hide his crime under the mask of duty. You assert that he would not have acted as he has done, had not Ferdinand approached my territory with an army. This excuses him not; for it is not as he states: men of credit have assured me that it was you and your prince, who, by a secret and base artifice, formed this intrigue with the emperor and Ferdinand at Ratisbonne, and at Prague, and that the time will come when all will be discovered, and placed in its proper light. But, by the grace of God, I am

returned to the borders of my land, and at the head of an army ; and I am resolved to do all in my power for the recovery and the defence of my dominions. In pursuing this just attempt, I will take such vengeance on you, and principally on the authors of the design, as shall make you feel in yourselves how great has been the injury inflicted upon me. I am deeply afflicted that such should be the state of things ! I lament the sorrows of our common country ; but it is you who have commenced the line of conduct from which they spring ; and if they are increased while I endeavour to do away the oppression of my subjects, it is you alone who must still be regarded as the authors of the misery."

It was not without a feeling of confidence and resolution that the elector thus concluded his epistle ; nor did he lose any time in putting into execution the threats which it contained. Leading his army to the gates of Leipzig, he poured such a volley of balls into the city, that the inhabitants had ample reason to abhor the policy which had exposed them to such a fate. The garrison of this city was sufficiently strong to prevent the elector from taking it ; but, though baffled in this instance, there was scarcely another city in the territory, with the exception of Dresden, which did not fall into his hands.

The emperor and Ferdinand received intelligence of these events with vexed and angry feelings. Both the one and the other furnished some troops to assist Maurice in his defence ; and when fresh intelligence was brought from day to day of his continued losses, the marquis of Brandenburg volunteered his services as a mediator between the contending powers. The retreat of the elector from before Leipzig reinstated Maurice in his former confidence ; and, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of the mediating prince, he resolved upon continuing the war. When affairs again showed the probability of the elector's triumphing, Maurice appealed to the emperor anew, and a con-

siderable force was sent to his assistance. The success, however, with which the town of Brohlitz was besieged, reassured the elector, and he found himself in a condition to carry on the war, notwithstanding the strength of the enemy, and the general backwardness of his associates to plunge as deeply as himself into the perilous struggle.

Maurice had found in Ferdinand a firm and zealous friend ; but the influence of that prince was not sufficient to overcome the disgust with which the Bohemians contemplated the persecution of the elector. Though led into the field, these brave people could not be persuaded to act against their old ally ; and when pressed by the king, till the refusal of aid seemed no longer possible, they besought him not to compel their personal service, however he might insist on the grant of subsidies. The wrath of the emperor was not soothed by these circumstances ; and the subjection of Strasburg and other places of importance, stimulating his pride, he manifested his determination to leave nothing undone which might secure the final ruin of the unfortunate elector. Addressing the ministers of Maurice, he said, " Since John Frederic, the proscribed, has returned after his flight, and has not only recovered that of which the elector Maurice deprived him by my orders, but has seized upon the possessions of my brother Ferdinand in these quarters, I am on my way to chastise his insolence and rebellion. I therefore demand, in the first place, that nothing may be wanting to my army in its progress to the scene of action, and that my soldiers may be received and treated with humanity : still more, that despising the calumnies of John Frederic, you may continue, as in time past, to render to your prince every mark of fidelity and love."

Early in the month of April the emperor again addressed the Bohemians, urging them in pressing terms to lend their aid to Maurice at this juncture of affairs ; and intimating that both he and his brother Ferdinand should regard their refusal as a mark of signal dis-

respect. But the council of Prague remained firm to the cause of the elector and the confederacy. "We are bound to defend our common faith," said they, "and beseech the emperor and the king of the Romans not to pursue this war against the elector, but to seek some friendly mode of terminating the dispute."

On the 18th of the month, the emperor and Ferdinand began their march, at the head of a well-disciplined army, towards Meissen. The elector, who was posted there with the main body of his troops, retreated at their approach to Muhlberg on the Elbe, whither he was followed by the emperor, who came up with him on the 24th. An engagement was now inevitable; but the elector had so little expected the rapid movement of the enemy, that he was attending church when news was brought him that the whole army of the emperor had effected, by a desperate charge, the passage of the Elbe. Alarmed and uncertain how to act, he began a hasty march towards Wittemberg: but the activity of the imperialists was inexhaustible; and in the forest of Lochan, about three miles from the Elbe, the two armies stood fairly opposed to each other, and prepared to decide the fatal quarrel of their princes. The extraordinary paleness of the sun, and the melancholy gloom which every where prevailed, were signs, it is said, of what was about to happen.

The conflict was kept up till night-fall. Each party fought with skill and desperation; but the emperor's force was by far the more numerous, and among its leaders were some of the most celebrated generals of the age. The duke of Alba and Maurice, Lanoy, Antony Toledo, and Spinelli, charged with the first division; while the other was led on by a band of princes, consisting of the emperor himself, king Ferdinand and his two sons, and the young princes of Saxony. Unfortunately for the elector, his army had been weakened by the necessity of leaving a garrison in Wittemberg; and though he fought bravely and skilfully it was soon evident that the fortune of the day

must be against him. Wounded in the face, and overwhelmed by numbers, he at length laid down his sword, and was immediately conducted, first to the duke of Alba, and then, to the emperor. Charles beheld the fallen prince with a look of stern satisfaction, and on his saying, "I am your prisoner, gracious emperor; allow me, I pray, a guard worthy of a prince," replied insultingly, "I am then your emperor! You shall be treated as you deserve." Ferdinand expressed himself in a similar spirit; and the elector saw from the beginning, that he had little to hope from the generosity of his conquerors.

Nothing was wanting to complete the triumph of Charles and the party he had espoused. The forces of the elector were utterly broken up and dispersed; nor could the most sanguine of his supporters see a hope of reviving the struggle in his favour. A few days only were allowed to pass over, when the emperor entered Wittemberg with all the pride and display of a victor. The captive prince was called before him; and having been obliged to hear a long accusation of baseness and rebellion, received sentence of death. It was now the time for this enlightened and pious man to show his virtues and his fortitude. He had been overcome in the field. His skill as a chief was inferior to that of his conqueror; nor did he possess the qualities which insure for a prince admiration in the eyes of bold and busy politicians. But in this hour of affliction he proved himself superior to the storms of adversity, to the fear of death, and whatever else is most terrible to all but the wisest men. "I did not think," he calmly said, on hearing the sentence, "that the emperor would have acted thus: but I should like to know if my death, be indeed resolved on, that I may be able to do what is necessary for my wife and children."

The news of what had taken place produced the most lively concern in the states of Saxony, in Bohemia, and in every quarter of Germany where the light which had been bestowed by the reformation was valued as a

blessing. An indescribable feeling of horror took possession of every other feeling, when it became known that the elector had been condemned to death. The first to interfere was the elector of Brandebourg, who lost no time in seeking the emperor, and employing his intercessions for the illustrious prisoner. Charles allowed himself to be turned from his darker purpose ; but he began by proposing conditions which, unless he measured all men by his own worldly spirit, could not, he knew, be accepted. Thus the offer of a commutation of punishment was, in the first place, made to depend on the elector's agreeing to approve whatever the council of Trent, or the emperor himself, might determine concerning religion. But the proposal was not listened to a moment, and the elector stood prepared for the worst. Charles, therefore, saw himself obliged to lower the tone of his demand in respect to religion, and to confine the conditions to things which regarded only the temporal affairs of his prisoner. By the terms at length agreed on, the elector resigned his dignity, and all his states, as well for his children as himself, absolutely, into the hands of the emperor. " He promised, moreover, to observe all the decrees which might be hereafter passed, and to remain during life as the prisoner of the emperor, or the prince of Spain." It was agreed, on the other hand by Charles, that in return for these sacrifices, he should receive a certain sum annually for his support, retain possession of the town of Gotha, its citadel and fortifications being first destroyed ; and be assisted by a present grant of money for the payment of the debts which he had contracted in his late proceedings.

The agreement being signed by both the parties, John Frederic had an interview with his son and his brother, who came to see him in the camp. From them he learnt, that the brave soldiers of Wittemberg refused to give up the fortress till he should send them a positive command to lay down their arms. The unfortunate prince immediately sent word that he freed

them from the oath they had taken on entering his service, and desired them to retire in three days. Soon after this his afflicted wife left the city, and seeking the emperor besought him to pity their miserable state. Charles was moved at the sight of her distress ; and endeavouring to console her, gave permission for her husband to return with her to Wittemberg, and remain there a week. The re-appearance of the deposed elector, surrounded by his weeping consort and children, and allowed only such a brief period to take leave of a place so dear to his family, melted all hearts capable of sympathy ; but taught to many that had never felt it before, how dignified is virtue in affliction, and how mighty is the spirit of holiness when seen in direct conflict with the world and its misfortunes.

While the elector of Saxony was thus yielding to the stroke of calamity, the landgrave of Hesse looked forward with the expectation of speedily sharing the fate of his faithful ally. The resolution of the emperor was not to be doubted ; and the powerful friends which the landgrave possessed in Maurice and the elector of Brandebourg could alone preserve him from all the evils which had fallen on the head of the deposed elector. At their urgent solicitation he was persuaded to meet the storm before it had gathered in its full strength. Escape, he saw and acknowledged, was impossible ; and after a brief struggle with his pride, he consented to resign his dominions into the hand of the emperor, and to hold them for the future only under his control. On coming to this resolution, he hastened to meet the emperor who had taken up his quarters at Hall. Maurice and the elector of Brandebourg were there to receive him, and press the conclusion of the affair. The articles of the treaty had been before stated, and it only remained for him to sign the instrument in which they were set forth. But on examining the paper, the landgrave found it stated that the sense of the articles was to depend on the interpretation given them by the emperor. To this he objected ; not only on the ground of its

dangerous tendency, but because it was not stated in the conditions originally placed before him. His objections, however, were overruled ; and there appeared to be no further difficulty in the way of the negotiation, when the bishop of Arras demanded that in return for the assurance he received in regard to religious freedom, he should promise to obey the decrees of the council of Trent.*

This was a fresh demand ; and the landgrave at once replied, that he would much rather endure the ills which might come upon him from breaking off the negotiation, than consent to an article like this. The bishop argued in vain ; persuasion proved equally fruitless : at length the prelate ceased from argument and persuasion ; and sternly remarking that the emperor would wait no longer for his answer, taught the unfortunate prince to understand that if he did not accept the conditions as now offered, he might be compelled to expect others still less tolerable or indulgent. Terrified at the prospect thus suddenly presented to his imagination, he humbled himself sufficiently to declare that he would obey the decrees of a free, pious, and general council, satisfying his conscience by these qualifying epithets, and the addition of the sentence, “in which the head as well as the members shall be reformed.” No circumstance was neglected which could make the degraded prince more conscious of his fall, or more completely humble him in the sight of others. Led before the emperor, he was obliged to ask pardon at the foot of the throne for the offences of which he had been accused,—to make a formal surrender of his dignities, and to beseech his majesty to restore him to his states on the condition of a faithful and entire obedience to his will. Charles paused for a while after hearing the petition of the landgrave, as if not yet determined in what manner to proceed. At length he deigned a reply ; and after enlarging upon the clemency of his disposition, said, that at the solicitation of several princes he was induced to

* Sleidan, t. ii. liv. xix. p. 423.

grant the petition ; to forego the enactment of the penalties due to the crimes which had been committed ; and to exempt the offender from that perpetual imprisonment which had otherwise been inflicted.

Charles had so little of the generosity of the prince, or the charity of the Christian in his heart, that he did not condescend even to bid the humbled landgrave rise from his knees ; but allowed him to remain in that posture till he ventured to rise without bidding. Had this been all, the landgrave might have consoled himself with the thought that he would soon be on his road homewards, and that, once again among his people, the recollection of this painful scene would be speedily worn away. But, instead of being allowed to realise this consolatory hope, he found himself a prisoner.

On being about to leave the hall at the close of the ceremony above described, the elector of Brandebourg acquainted him that his company was desired at the duke of Alba's. The elector himself and Maurice escorted him thither, and the party supped with every appearance of friendship and hospitality. At the close of the repast, the duke took Maurice and the elector aside, leaving the landgrave to amuse himself with some game of chance. They remained absent till the night was far advanced. At length a messenger came and informed the prince that, contrary to all expectation, he must submit to remain in the custody of a body of guards. It was in vain to protest against this dishonourable act. Maurice and the elector hastened to assure him that they felt their credit pledged to see his liberty protected ; that they would remain with him during the night, and in the morning employ whatever influence they possessed, to turn the emperor from a continuance of such conduct. They failed not to fulfil their promise ; but the emperor declared that he always intended to pursue this course with the landgrave, and had only promised that he should not be kept in perpetual confinement. Day after day did these princes solicit that he might be set at liberty. Charles was

inexorable ; and they found themselves involved in a difficulty, which rendered their situation almost as bad as that of the landgrave himself. The best condition they could procure, after some further delays, and when all their arguments were exhausted, was this, — that the landgrave should be set at liberty on the payment of 150,000 gold crowns, and giving sureties for the fulfilment of the other parts of the treaty. Irritated and depressed, the landgrave professed himself willing to assent to this sacrifice, and thereby purchase the liberty of which he had been so unjustly and unexpectedly deprived.

Such was the fate of the two leaders of those numerous bands of reformers, who had so much reason to rejoice in the benefits procured for them under their auspices. It can scarcely, however, escape the observation of a thoughtful mind, that the darkest scenes in the history of the reformation had their origin in the interference of princes. Luther had sufficient foresight to discover, at a very early period of his labours, that, with all the seeming necessity of human power for his support, the cause in the sequel would lose by the political influences brought in, much more than it could gain. That he needed protection, and that the assistance rendered him by his pious sovereign was a timely aid, need not be doubted, though it may seem questionable whether the later proceedings of his powerful associates were ever likely to prove useful. There are certain seasons when Divine Providence appears to summon princes to promote the designs which he has planned for the good of his church. And so it may have been at the commencement of the reformation ; but when the sovereign brings into the bosom of a yet infant institution the complicated mass of his political relations, his aims and wishes as the inheritor of a crown, and its guardian for a remote posterity, there is at least some danger that the foundations may tremble beneath the unexpected weight. The electors of Saxony were rich in Christian graces, and their piety made them children of the church ; the bro-

thers of its people, rather than lords over God's heritage: but it is easy to see, that, had it not been for them, none of those measures could have been taken, which certainly contributed nothing to the promotion of a peaceful and conciliatory spirit. It was by their assistance alone that possession was taken of churches and monasteries, to which so little claim could suddenly be made; they alone authorised the forcible expulsion of the incumbents of benefices, and the breaking up of institutions, which, to have been made useful, must have been preserved. The reformers could have attempted none of these things as simple ministers of religion; and how glorious would have been the spectacle of a church growing up, in whose walls not a stone could be found which belonged to a ruined altar! That the reformation was not furthered by the eager appropriation of the wealth of the Roman church, will be acknowledged by many: but who will venture to deny, that it was not injured when dragged forward to be a partaker in the quarrel of princes; or when, accused as the chief minister of their wrath and ambition, it had to bear whatever evils might arise from their ill-planned encounters, or their habitually unsound policy? Both Henry VIII. and the landgrave of Hesse had an influence over the actors in the reformation, which, carried a little farther, would have not only rendered them unfit for the work, but have marred the work itself. What again can we say of Maurice, or how believe that, bringing in so much ambition and treachery, he could legitimately be ranked among the friends of a reformed church? Apart from the troubles brought upon it by political causes, the youthful institution might be called prosperous. The means of life and knowledge which it ministered had been gladly received by thousands. Seed had been planted in many tracts of good land, and was bringing forth fruit a hundred fold. But no minister of the truth had arisen up the foster child of courts: no champion had gone forth from the side of the throne to assert the value and the sufficiency of the Bible. Yet

by men of this kind it was that the reformation was begun, and carried on as far as it had actually gone. The cause in the hands of such men was successful still ; and a far more pleasing task would it have been for the historian to trace their footsteps and recount their triumphs, pursuing one definite object, one simple, grand design, than it is to relate how soon the church of God, recovered from a grievous bondage, was surrounded again by the powers of the world and of darkness.

While the pope and his imperial ally were pursuing their hostile enterprise against the protestants of Germany, the fathers of the council of Trent continued their deliberations on the weightiest topics of Christian doctrine, and the most important branches of ecclesiastical discipline. It would occupy too much of our space to pursue minutely, or step by step, the proceedings of this august assembly ; but we shall notice such points in its eventful labours as seem best calculated to exhibit the spirit which influenced its debates.

The nature of Divine Grace furnished the assembly with a subject for consideration which left no learning or talent unemployed that could be found among the members of the council. To prove that even in the church of Rome very wide differences of opinion have existed, it would be sufficient to give an abstract of some of the discussions carried on at this time in Trent. In the debate concerning the operations of the divine principle which sanctifies the heart, and gives a new life to the soul, there were some who strenuously contended for its absolute and irresistible power ; while others, on the contrary, as earnestly insisted that such a doctrine was false and presumptuous. The former argued that their belief was the only sufficient support to a humble and fearful soul ; that Jesus Christ has assured his people that their sins are forgiven them ; and that God has ever taught them to return thanks for their justification, which they could scarcely be required to do, if they knew not for certainty that the blessing has been

received. To this they added, that St. Paul bears abundant testimony to the truth of their doctrine, for that he says to the Corinthians, "What! know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" And to the Roman converts, "The spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God." "Can there be any danger then," say they, "in receiving the words of Christ and his Apostle? Or is it likely they would teach us a doctrine calculated to engender pride?" On the supposed answer to these questions, the advocate of the doctrine of absolute grace established his position, that it was folly to speak of receiving grace voluntarily, without being able to tell whether we have it or not: as if it were not necessarily implied in the receiving a thing voluntarily that we know it is given us, and that we really possess it.

Not less confident in the assertion of their particular views, the advocates of the opposite opinion had contended that God did not make men certain of their election, lest they should thereby become puffed up with pride and an arrogant confidence. For the support of this argument, they quoted the words of St. Paul, exhorting Christians to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling;" and these of the sage. "No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them." Soto, with the whole of the party which prided itself on the logic of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, contended for this interpretation of the question; but the reasons urged so forcibly for the contrary view of the subject, by the rest of the council, obliged them so far to compromise their opinions as to allow a distinction between ordinary Christians and martyrs, or such as might have received a special revelation from God. One of the principal disputants on this side even allowed that there might be a human and experimental faith, assuring the soul of its sanctification, and the presence of divine grace, in the same manner as being warm, we are convinced of the operation of heat. When this view of the subject was taken up, its supporters were pressed with

the question, Whether the faith so conceived was a divine faith; and, if so, whether it was equal to the catholic faith, excluding all doubt? To this inquiry it was answered, that though not the catholic faith, it was equal to the catholic faith, because divine; and that it was the same in this as in other cases where faith is given to particular revelations, but which, though a divine faith, is not the catholic faith till the revelations are generally received. Thus, it was observed, the prophets believed in the revelations of God with a faith which at first was private and particular, but which afterwards, that is, when their prophecies were received, became catholic, or universal. It is worthy of remark, that the opposite party objected to these notions as favouring the views of Luther; and that even this could not persuade their supporters to withdraw from the position they had taken. "In this respect," said they, "Luther would not have erred from sound doctrine if he had not asserted that this faith justifies, instead of regarding it as following justification." The passage quoted from St. Paul was then examined, and interpreted not as implying uncertainty, but as a Hebrew phrase expressive of awe and respect, in the same manner as we might describe the fears of servants in the presence of their masters, though assured of their kindness and love.

The arguments of the polemics seemed inexhaustible, and to those actively engaged in the dispute, they appeared to increase in value and interest in proportion to the length of time which the discussion occupied. But weary with the complexity of the subject, one of the legates proposed that it should, for the present, be laid aside, and another topic brought forward for the consideration of the assembly. As the doctrine of free-will was closely connected with that first debated, the divines insisted on the propriety of making it the subject of the next discussion. This proposal being assented to by the legate, theologians were appointed to exhibit the sentiments of Luther and the Lutherans on the question, and the following propositions were collected from

their writings: — 1. That God is the sole cause of all that is done, of bad works as well as good. 2. That no one can, of himself, think well or ill, but is under the power of absolute necessity. 3. That liberty was lost when man became a sinner, and is now but a name without a reality. 4. That we have only a liberty to do evil, and none to do good. 5. That free will is but as an inanimate instrument, and co-operates not to produce action. 6. That God converts only such as he is pleased to convert, and then does it without their will, and even against their will.

Invectives of the most violent kind were poured out when these propositions had been read. Some pronounced them to be the opinions of madmen; and others remarked that the authors of such errors ought not to be met with reasoning, but, as Aristotle advises in such cases, with the experimental censure of a sound chastisement. The unmeasured violence, however, of this angry feeling was, in some degree, checked by Catharin, who observed, "that as man could do nothing without the special grace of God, he might, in one sense, be said to have no freedom, and that, consequently, the fourth article ought not to be too readily condemned." But every attempt to persuade the council to conciliatory measures was regarded with extreme suspicion. Such endeavours, it was said, might be acceptable in a colloquy where the authority of the church suffered the rude invasion of the laity, but could not be entertained in an assembly constituted like the present.

The dispute was continued on the question, whether man is at liberty to believe or not to believe? By some it was asserted, that man is able to believe by the simplest exercise of his will: by others it was remarked, that as faith springs necessarily from evidence, persuasion produces it in the understanding, as a natural agent; a truth, they said, confirmed by daily experience, which shows that no one can believe what he might wish to

believe, but only that which has the evidence of truth about it.

It was easy to see, in the course of this discussion, that the opinions of Luther presented themselves under a very different aspect to different parties in the assembly; and that amid every effort to condemn them, as heretical, in the mass, the more candid of the theologians were obliged to allow, that there was much of sound theology and scriptural truth running through his system. This was remarkably the case when they came to examine his sentiments on election and predestination. Nothing could be found objectionable on these subjects either in the writings of Luther, or in the various confessions which had been made by the party in its conferences with the catholics. The ground-work of the discussion, therefore, on these articles was formed of propositions drawn from the works of Zuingle, whose doctrines were represented in the following propositions:— 1. That the cause of predestination is not to be found in man, but in the will of God. 2. That the predestinated can never lose their souls, nor the reprobate save them. 3. That none but the elect and predestinated are truly justified. 4. That the justified are obliged by faith to believe that they are of the number of the predestinated. 5. That the justified cannot fall from grace. 6. That those who are called, but are not of the number of the predestinated, receive not grace. 7. That a justified man must believe that he will persevere unto the end. 8. That a justified man ought to believe firmly, that if he lose grace he will receive it again. On the first of these articles, the most distinguished of the divines expressed themselves as believing its consistency with catholic doctrine. This opinion they supported by an appeal to the celebrated schoolmen, Thomas Aquinas and Scot, who argued, that God elected before the foundation of the world, by his uninfluenced mercy, some persons whom he predestinated to glory, and for whom he prepared those means of grace which should enable them to fulfil his intentions; that the number

of these persons was certain and determinate, and could not be increased; that those who were not thus elected had no right to complain, since he had prepared sufficient assistance to incline them to good, although effectively the elect only would attain to it. In support of this opinion, they quoted numerous passages from St. Paul, and summed up their arguments by an appeal to Augustine, an authority, at that time, in the church from which it was not safe to differ very widely.*

Catharin headed the opponents to this view of predestination and election, but found himself obliged to adopt a middle course. According to him, God had chosen a small number of persons out of the mass of mankind, whom he had absolutely willed to save, and that for this purpose he had prepared them helps which could not fail of proving efficacious; but that, with regard to the rest, he desired that they also might be saved, and had, therefore, provided them with means sufficient for their delivery, but left them at liberty to accept them, and to obtain salvation, or reject it and perish; that of the number thus circumstanced, many would be saved, although not belonging to the elect; and that the rest, rejecting the means of grace, would be left to destruction: that the will of God was the sole cause of the predestination of the first; that the salvation of the others was the effect of their accepting, and co-operating with, the grace bestowed upon them by God; and that the reprobation of the third class arose from the foreknowledge which God had of their voluntary refusal of his help, and the terms of salvation which were offered them. To this, it was added, that the various passages of St. John and St. Paul, and all the other places of Scripture brought forward in this controversy, and in which God speaks of an absolute election, ought only to

* Paul Sarpi remarks, on the two opinions, that the first was the most mysterious and incomprehensible, and therefore the better calculated to humble pride; to make man place all his trust in God, rather than on himself; to make man see the deformity of sin and the excellency of grace. The other, he says, was the more plausible and popular, and, therefore, approved of by the monks, who were better skilled in preaching than in the science of theology. Liv. ii. t. i. p. 379.

be understood of the first ; that the exhortations to repentance, and the frequent offers of mercy which occur in Scripture, are addressed to all the rest in common : that the number of the few who were elected by God's eternal decree was fixed, but that the number of those who were saved by the use of grace, depended on his foresight of their works and dispositions.

A similar difference of opinion prevailed on the second article, but the rest were condemned without dissension ; and it was especially remarked, in reference to the third and sixth propositions, that the church had always taught that persons might receive, and for sometime preserve, grace, and yet in the end perish. The examples brought in illustration of this opinion were those of Solomon and Saul, but especially that of Judas, whose perdition was less a matter of doubt than that of the two monarchs : Christ having distinctly said, " I have lost none but the son of perdition." There was, however, yet another example, and that, in the eyes of these divines, even more convincing than the fall of the traitor Judas, this was no other than that of Luther.

Some difficulty was felt in drawing up the anathemas, lest the curse of the church might be sent forth against opinions, the error of which was not clearly proved. In the disputes which followed on this important matter, the conflict between reason, charity, and the dignity of the council, was singularly characteristic of the different parties in the assembly. At length it was agreed, that two decrees should be drawn up, so as to separate the catholic doctrine from that which opposed it. Of these instruments, the one which contained the anathemas was called the decree of doctrine ; and the other received the name of Canons.

It ought not to create surprise that the cardinal St. Cervin, who was commissioned to frame these documents, found inconceivable difficulty in satisfying the various parties in the council. The same must have been the case in any extensive assemblage of divines, anxious to

express, in the most definite terms, opinions, which, when brought fairly to the light, wanted, by their very nature, the definiteness which it was sought to give them in language. But, notwithstanding the almost insurmountable difficulties of the task, the cardinal so far surmounted them, that all parties were satisfied, and each agreed to find in the decrees the expression of his own sentiments and doctrines.* The only drawback to the merit of the cardinal was this, — that the council is believed to have sought the concealment of the differences which existed among its members, and that the statement of doctrine, therefore, was not likely to be examined by the fathers with that obstinate subtilty of thought, which, at first sight, might have been expected.

Among the questions of reform agitated in the intervals of polemical dispute, that respecting the residence of the clergy was carried on with the greatest ardour. The Dominicans, led by Soto, contended that prolonged absence from an ecclesiastical benefice ought to be considered as the breach of a divine law. Several canonists, on the other hand, and the Italian bishops, regarded it as a violation of canonical obedience only, defining residence to be an ecclesiastical obligation, and nothing more. The chief supporters of Soto in this debate were the Spanish bishops, who had combined, it is said, to promote, as far as possible, the interests and dignity of their order; and, therefore, to establish the laws by which they were to be governed on the institution of Christ, which, once allowed, would have enabled them to assert their independence of the pope. The legates, seeing the danger likely to arise from a continuance of the discussion, prudently warned the fathers against pursuing a question which might lead to a schism

* Fra Paoli instances as a proof of this, that, shortly after the breaking up of the council, Dominic Soto wrote three books "On Nature and Grace," as a commentary on the doctrine of the council, which he says was his own; while Andrew Vega, who led an opposite party in the assembly, said also in his commentaries, published about the same time, that the decree were the mirror of his opinions.—T. i. liv. ii. n. 80.

among catholics themselves, and thus weaken their authority against the Lutherans.

Of those who could not be persuaded to give up the consideration of a matter so important to the interests of Christendom, and so interesting to many present, from personal feelings, some contended that the best method of curing the alledged abuse, would be to renew the authority of the ancient canons * ; which, it was

* The following passage will show how closely the early church watched over this part of its discipline : — “ The next laws of this nature were such as concerned the residence of the clergy ; the design of which was the same as all the former, — to bind them to constant attendance upon their duty ; and these laws equally concerned bishops and all the inferior clergy. The council of Sardica has several canons relating to this matter. The seventh decrees, that no bishop should go *εις στρατοπεδον*, to the emperor's court, unless the emperor, by letter, called him thither. The next canon provides, that whereas there might be several cases which might require a bishop to make some application to the emperor in behalf of the poor, or widows, or such as fled for sanctuary to the church, and condemned criminals, and the like : in such cases the deacons, or subdeacons, of the church were to be employed to go in his name, that the bishop might fall under no censure at court, as neglecting the business of his church. *Justinian* has a law of the same import with these canons, — that no bishop should appear at court upon any business of his church without the command of the prince ; but, if any petition was to be preferred to the emperor, relating to any civil contest, the bishop should depute his apocrisarius, or resident at court, to act for him ; or send his *oconomus*, or some other of his clergy, to solicit the cause in his name, that the church might neither receive damage by his absence, nor be put to unnecessary expenses. Another canon of the council of Sardica limits the absence of a bishop from his church to three weeks, unless it were upon some very weighty and urgent occasion. And another canon allows the same time for a bishop, who is possessed of an estate in another diocese, to go and collect his revenues, provided he celebrate divine service every Lord's Day in the country church where his estate lies. And, by two other canons of that council, presbyters and deacons are limited to the same term of absence, and tied to the fore-mentioned rules, in the same manner that bishops were. The council of *Agde* made the like order for the *French* churches ; decreeing, that a presbyter, or deacon, who was absent from his church for three weeks, should be three years suspended from the communion. In the *African* churches, upon the account of this residence, every bishop's house was to be near the church, by a rule of the fourth council of Carthage. And in the fifth council there is another rule, that every bishop shall have his residence at his principal or cathedral church, which he shall not leave to betake himself to any other church in his diocese ; nor continue upon his private concerns, to the neglect of his cure and hinderance of his frequenting the cathedral church. From this it appears, that the city church was to be the chief place of the bishop's residence and cure. And *Cabassutius*, in his remarks upon this canon, reflects upon the *French* bishops as transgressing the ancient rule, in spending the greatest part of the year upon their pleasure in the country. Yet there is one thing that seems a difficulty in this matter ; for *Justinian* says, no bishop shall be absent from his church above a whole year, unless he has the emperor's command for it : which implies that a bishop might be absent from his bishopric a year in ordinary cases, and more in extraordinary. But I conceive the meaning of this is, that he might be absent a year during his whole life : not year after year, for that would amount to a perpetual absence, which it was not the intent of the law to grant, but to tie them up to the direct contrary, except the prince, upon some extraordinary affair, thought fit to grant them a particular dispensation.” — *Bingham's Works*, vol. ii. p. 224.

said could not be regarded as pardoning remissness, seeing that they punished the offence with deposition; nor, on the other hand, as unreasonable, since they allowed legitimate excuses for absence; and, therefore, that the only thing needed was the introduction of some strict rule, to prevent the too frequent granting of dispensations. Others, again, pressed for the addition of new penalties; and the majority of the council appeared convinced, by the reasonings of both parties, that in any attempt at reformation the most decided measures must be adopted on this subject. The pontiff heard of these debates with no easy feeling. He trembled for his favourite prelates, and still more for his cardinals; many of whom held rich and extensive sees. As he apprehended, it was proposed in the council that the cardinal-prelates, as well as other bishops, should be obliged to reside in their dioceses. The cardinal del Monte promised that they would do so; but desired that their names might not be mentioned in the decree. It was next demanded, that a prohibition against the holding of many benefices should be introduced; and that this law also should extend to the cardinals. Here, again, Del Monte was obliged to employ his eloquence and his influence to induce the meeting to defer the establishment of the proposed rule to a more convenient time*; but scarcely had he effected this, when he saw himself involved in a fresh difficulty by the revival of the old demand, that the council should be described as representing the universal church. From this proposal he again contrived to extricate himself, or, rather, the cause of the papacy; but discontent set on the brows of many of the members, and it was evident that frequent conflicts of such a nature would speedily sap the foundation on which the legates alone hoped to fix their temporary authority.

At the opening of the sixth session of the council, there were present four cardinals, ten archbishops, and forty-five bishops; two abbots, five generals of the

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* Fleury, l. cxliii. n. 53.

monastic orders, and the procureurs of the cardinal of Augsburg, and the archbishop of Trèves. The business of the meeting was opened with the solemnities of religion; and the dignified ecclesiastics present were reminded at once of their distinction and their duty by the reading of the Gospel, which says to its ministers, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" At the conclusion of this solemn admonition, the cardinal del Monte, as first legate, delivered a corresponding discourse, and then chanted the *Veni Creator Spiritus*; every heart that could entertain a sentiment of devotion bowing with awe, as the heavenly harmony of that most beautiful of hymns pealed through the throngs of God's professed and consecrated ministers. The service ended, the cardinals, prelates, and numerous theologians took their seats; when the archbishop of Spalatro commenced the reading of the decrees, as drawn up by order of the council at its preceding meetings.

In the summary of doctrine thus published by the highest authority of the Roman church, it is stated that, with regard to justification, every disposition which leads to its attainment is the effect of active and preventing grace, which is given by God freely, and not as a debt. Man, it adds, has by his own will destroyed himself, but is not able, by any effort of his own, to recover the blessing lost, to cure the wounds inflicted by sin, or reawaken even the desire of holiness. This being the case, he can place his hope on no other foundation than the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ. The first step towards the recovery of holiness is faith in the promises of God; and the characteristic of faith is this,—the will is freely inclined towards God; indicating thereby the presence of divine love, the will having no tendency towards God till it begins to love; "love," says St. Augustin, "being the weight which moves the soul, and turns the will." Revelation, continues this interesting memoir, discovers to the sinner both terrible and consoling truths;

and, from the consideration of these two classes of admonition, God awakens in the soul of the sinner two corresponding dispositions; that is, the fear of God's justice, and the hope of pardon through his mercy. Bowed down with the weight of his terrors, the offender looks to the mercy of God for help. In that he discovers a sure refuge; and, inspired with new confidence, founded on the merits of Christ, he throws himself into the arms of infinite goodness and unmeasured compassion. A holy love springs up in his soul as he thus embraces the hope of forgiveness; charity alone preparing the way for its own admission into the heart. But the sinner must love God, as the source of all righteousness: this must be the source of his hatred to sin, and of his desire to fulfil all the divine commandments. Still, none of these dispositions, preceding justification; has any merit; for the apostle plainly declares, that we are justified freely by grace. The effects of this justification are described as consisting in the remission of sins, the sanctification and renewal of the soul, in such a manner, that the sinner, by the operation of this mysterious and divine principle, becomes truly just, the friend of God, and an inheritor of eternal life. This change, so wonderful in its present effects, so grand in respect to futurity, is wrought by the Holy Spirit, who forms in the heart the sacred inclinations of faith, and those graces of hope and charity which unite it with Jesus Christ, and make the believer one with him.

Cautious in all its expressions, and in this respect wisely attentive to the infinite value of divine truth, even in its lowest degrees and minutest portions, the decree continues to say, that it is not faith alone which raises man to this high dignity. Faith is the commencement of salvation, the foundation and the root of all justification; but, separated from charity it is dead, and, consequently, avails not to the justification of the sinner in the sight of God. Grace received and cherished in the heart, he who has been thus sanc-

tified, remains not satisfied with the degree of holiness at first obtained, but advances from one step to another, adding grace to grace, and virtue to virtue ; becoming every day more and more sanctified by prayer, by mortification, the practice of good works, and the exact observance of the laws of God, and the maxims of the Gospel. Thus exercising themselves in the practice of holiness, the followers of Christ learn the truth of those divine words of their master, " My yoke is easy, and my burden is light ;" for, being children of God, they love him, and love it is which makes it easy to perform the task which he sets them, and delightful to fulfil his law. And if he be pleased sometimes to convince them of their natural darkness and helplessness, by hiding his face a moment from them ; if he be pleased to make them feel by these means the necessity of his presence and his spirit, they despair not ; but, knowing that his grace is sufficient for them, that his grace is made perfect in weakness, they do but pray the more, and express more strongly their desires for his present help, being assured that they will receive the aid which is necessary, so as to be enabled to persevere unto the end, and obtain the crown which is laid up for his faithful servants. Nor do they believe that any other strength but God's strength could enable them thus to persevere, or that all who are justified do thus proceed to perfection in righteousness. They look not for an entire and absolute assurance that God will establish them in glory ; yet is there no misgiving, no inquietude in their hearts. The great truths of their faith convince them that they may safely place a full and continuing trust in God, and that he will perfect the work which he has begun in their hearts ; giving them both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. Instead of this trust inspiring them with presumption, it induces them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, since they feel and acknowledge that their hearts are naturally corrupt, that they are full of pride and ingratitude, an

that the enemies which they have to combat are mighty and persevering. And this fear, while it diminishes not their confidence, excites them to constant vigilance, humbles them under the mighty hand of God, and leads them to employ all the means which religion furnishes to preserve them from falling back into the miserable condition out of which they have been delivered. The prospect of everlasting joy, when their course shall be finished, animates them to the practice of all holy virtue : they know that eternal glory is promised to the children of God, for the sake of Christ, and as a recompence for the good works which they performed in their course through the world : for faith teaches that Jesus Christ infuses continually his living spirit into the souls of those who are justified, even as the sap of the vine flows into its branches ; and that this divine virtue precedes, accompanies, and always follows their good works, which could not, without its influence, be acceptable or meritorious in the sight of God. Faith teaches them this gracious truth : they cannot doubt but that their good works, thus produced by the power of God, must have a merit in his sight, and procure for them an augmentation of sanctity in this life, and a proportionate degree of glory in that which is to come. But they acknowledge, that the merit which is thus ascribed to their good works should teach them to glory, not in themselves, but in the Lord, since that it is of his gracious mercy alone they have the power to work, and of his wonderful condescension only that they are rewarded for the things effected by his grace.*

* According to the arrangement made for clearly distinguishing the catholic from erroneous doctrine, the decree on the true doctrine of justification was followed by thirty-three canons, each accompanied by its anathema, condemning what the Roman church regarded as heretical. We give these canons, as valuable illustrations :—

I. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme peut être justifié devant Dieu par ses propres œuvres, faites seulement selon les lumières de la nature, ou selon les préceptes de la loi, sans la grace de Dieu méritée par Jésus-Christ ; qu'il soit anathème.

II. Si quelqu'un dit que la grace de Dieu méritée par Jésus-Christ n'est donnée qu'afin seulement que l'homme puisse plus aisément vivre dans la justice, et mériter la vie éternelle, comme si par le libre arbitre, sans la

This declaration of doctrine was followed by another, relating to the articles of reformation discussed at the

grace, il pouvout faire l'un et l'autre quoique pourtant avec peine et difficulté ; qu'il soit anathème.

III. Si quelqu'un dit que sans l'opération prévenante du Saint-Esprit, et sans son secours, un homme peut faire des actes de foi, d'espérance, de charité et de repentir, tels qu'ils doivent être pour obtenir la grace de la justification ; qu'il soit anathème.

IV. Si quelqu'un dit que le libre arbitre mu et excité de Dieu, en donnant son consentement à Dieu qui l'excite et l'appelle, ne coopère en rien à se préparer et à se mettre en état d'obtenir la grace de la justification, et qu'il ne peut refuser son consentement, s'il le veut, mais qu'il est comme une chose inanimée, sans rien faire, et purement passif ; qu'il soit anathème. (Lainez, Jésuite député de sa société, dont nous rapporterons ailleurs la naissance et les progrès, demanda que l'on fit un changement à ce canon ; parce que le terme *motum*, mu, employé par le concile pour marquer l'action de Dieu sur le libre arbitre, lui paroissoit trop fort. Mais les pères rejetèrent sa demande avec indignation, en disant, *l'oras Pelagiani*, Chassez les Pélagiens.)

V. Si quelqu'un dit que depuis le péché d'Adam, le libre arbitre de l'homme est perdu et éteint, que ce n'est qu'un nom sans réalité, ou enfin une fiction et une vaine imagination que le démon a introduite dans l'église ; qu'il soit anathème.

VI. Si quelqu'un dit qu'il n'est pas au pouvoir de l'homme de rendre ses voies mauvaises, mais que Dieu opère les mauvaises œuvres, aussi-bien que les bonnes, non-seulement en tant qu'il les permet, mais proprement et par lui-même ; en sorte que la trahison de Judas n'est pas moins son propre ouvrage (de Dieu), que la vocation de Saint Paul ; qu'il soit anathème.

VII. Si quelqu'un dit que toutes les actions qui se font avant la justification, de quelque manière qu'elles soient faites, sont de véritables péchés ; ou qu'elles méritent la haine de Dieu ; ou, que plus un homme s'efforce de se disposer à la grace, plus il pèche grièvement ; qu'il soit anathème.

VIII. Si quelqu'un dit que la crainte de l'enfer qui nous porte à avoir recours à la miséricorde de Dieu, et qui est accompagnée de la douleur de nos péchés, ou qui nous fait abstenir de pécher, est un péché, ou qu'elle rend les pécheurs encore pires ; qu'il soit anathème.

IX. Si quelqu'un dit que l'homme est justifié par-la seule foi, en sorte qu'on entende par-là que pour obtenir la grace de la justification, on n'a besoin d'aucune autre chose qui y coopère ; et qu'il n'est pas même nécessaire, en aucune manière, que l'homme se prépare et se dispose par le mouvement de sa volonté ; qu'il soit anathème.

X. Si quelqu'un dit que les hommes sont justes sans la justice de Jésus-Christ, par laquelle il nous a mérité d'être justifiés ; ou que c'est par cette justice même de Jésus-Christ qu'ils sont formellement justes ; qu'il soit anathème.

XI. Si quelqu'un dit que les hommes sont justifiés, ou par la seule imputation de la justice de Jésus-Christ, ou par la seule rémission des péchés, en excluant la grace et la charité qui est répandue dans leurs cœurs par le Saint-Esprit, et qui leur est inhérente : ou bien que la grace, par laquelle nous sommes justifiés, n'est autre chose que la faveur de Dieu ; qu'il soit anathème.

XII. Si quelqu'un dit que la foi justificante n'est autre chose que la confiance en la divine miséricorde qui remet les péchés à cause de Jésus-Christ, ou que c'est par cette seule confiance que nous sommes justifiés ; qu'il soit anathème.

XIII. Si quelqu'un dit qu'il est nécessaire à tout homme, pour obtenir la rémission de ses péchés, de croire certainement, et sans hésiter, sur (ou à cause de) ses propres faiblesses et son indisposition, que ses péchés lui sont remis ; qu'il soit anathème.

XIV. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme est absous de ses péchés et justifié

preceding meeting of the council, or its congregations. By this decree it was ordained, that if any prelate, of what-

de ce qu'il (ou aussi-tôt qu'il) croit avec certitude être absous et justifié, ou que personne n'est véritablement justifié, que celui qui se croit être justifié, et que c'est par cette seule foi ou confiance que l'absolution et la justification s'accomplit ; qu'il soit anathème.

XV. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme né de nouveau (par le baptême) et justifié, est obligé selon la foi de croire qu'il est certainement du nombre des prédestinés ; qu'il soit anathème.

XVI. Si quelqu'un dit qu'il est certain d'une certitude absolue et infaillible, s'il ne l'a appris par une révélation particulière, qu'il aura certainement le grand don de la persévérance jusqu'à la fin ; qu'il soit anathème.

XVII. Si quelqu'un dit que la grace de la justification n'est que pour ceux qui sont prédestinés à la vie, et que tous les autres qui sont appelés sont à la vérité appelés, mais qu'il ne reçoivent point la grace, comme étant prédestinés au mal par la puissance de Dieu ; qu'il soit anathème.

XVIII. Si quelqu'un dit que les commandemens de Dieu sont impossibles à garder, même dans celui qui est justifié et en état de grace ; qu'il soit anathème.

XIX. Si quelqu'un dit que dans l'évangile il n'y a que la foi seule qui soit de précepte, et que toutes les autres choses sont indifférentes, n'étant ni commandées ni défendues, mais laissées à la liberté, ou que les dix commandemens ne regardent point les Chrétiens ; qu'il soit anathème.

XX. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme justifié, quelque parfait qu'il puisse être, n'est pas obligé à observer les commandemens de Dieu et de l'église, mais seulement à croire, comme si l'évangile ne consistoit que dans la promesse simple et absolue de la vie éternelle, sans la condition d'observer les commandemens ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXI. Si quelqu'un dit que Jésus-Christ a été donné de Dieu aux hommes, en qualité seulement de rédempteur, dans lequel ils doivent mettre leur confiance, et non pas aussi comme législateur auquel ils doivent obéir ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXII. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme justifié peut persévérer dans la justice qu'il a reçue, sans un secours particulier de Dieu ; ou, au contraire, qu'avec ce secours même il ne le peut pas ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXIII. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme, une fois justifié, ne peut plus pécher ni perdre la grace, et qu'ainsi celui qui tombe dans le péché n'a jamais été vraiment justifié ; ou, au contraire, qu'un homme justifié peut pendant toute sa vie éviter toute sorte de péchés, même les véniels, si ce n'est par un privilège particulier de Dieu, comme c'est le sentiment de l'église à l'égard de la sainte Vierge ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXIV. Si quelqu'un dit que la justice qui a été reçue n'est pas conservée et même augmentée devant Dieu par les bonnes œuvres ; mais que ces bonnes œuvres sont les fruits seulement de la justification, et des marques qu'on l'a reçue, mais non une cause qui l'augmente ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXV. Si quelqu'un dit qu'en quelque bonne œuvre que ce soit, le juste pèche au moins véniellement ; ou, ce qui est encore plus insupportable, qu'il pèche mortellement, et qu'ainsi il mérite les peines éternelles ; et que la seule raison pour laquelle il n'est pas damné, c'est parceque Dieu ne lui impute pas ces œuvres à damnation ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXVI. Si quelqu'un dit que les justes ne doivent point, pour leurs bonnes œuvres faites en Dieu, attendre ni espérer de lui la récompense éternelle, par sa miséricorde et le mérite de Jésus-Christ, pourvu qu'ils persévèrent jusqu'à la fin en faisant le bien et en gardant ses commandemens ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXVII. Si quelqu'un dit qu'il n'y a point d'autre péché mortel que le péché d'infidélité ; ou que la grace qu'on a une fois reçue ne se perd par aucun autre péché, quelque grief et quelque énorme qu'il soit, que par celui de l'infidélité ; qu'il soit anathème.

ever rank or standing he might be, should remain away from his diocese six months, without just and sufficient cause, he should lose a fourth part of its revenue ; that if he prolonged his absence to the end of six months more, he should suffer the loss of another fourth part of his income ; and that if he continued to be guilty of the same offence, the metropolitan should be obliged, under pain of an interdiction, to denounce him to the pope, who should punish him, or deliver his diocese into the hands of a more worthy pastor. Corresponding punishments were allowed for the correction of the lower orders of ecclesiastics ; and, though this was but one step in the progress towards a reformation, it was an important advance for a church which had, during so many ages, resisted every attempt made to warn it of its corruptions, and the rulers of which seemed ever to be employed in satisfying their ambition, or seeking means for the safer violation of all wholesome discipline.*

The subjects proposed for consideration the next ses-

XXVIII. Si quelqu'un dit que la grace étant perdue par le péché, la foi se perd aussi en même temps ; ou que la foi qui reste n'est pas une véritable foi, quoiqu'elle ne soit pas vive ; ou que celui qui a la foi sans la charité n'est pas Chrétien ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXIX. Si quelqu'un dit que celui qui est tombé dans le péché depuis le baptême ne peut pas se relever avec le secours de la grace de Dieu ; ou bien qu'il peut à la vérité recouvrer la grace qu'il avoit perdue, mais que c'est par la seule foi, sans le secours du sacrement de pénitence, contre ce que l'église Romaine et universelle, instruite par Jésus-Christ et par ses apôtres, a jusqu'ici cru, tenu, et enseigné ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXX. Si quelqu'un dit qu'à tout pécheur pénitent qui a reçu la grace de la justification, l'offense est tellement remise, et l'obligation à la peine éternelle tellement effacée et abolie, qu'il ne lui reste aucune peine temporelle à payer, soit en cette vie, soit en l'autre dans le purgatoire, avant que l'entrée au royaume du ciel puisse lui être ouverte ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXXI. Si quelqu'un dit qu'un homme justifié pèche, lorsqu'il fait de bonnes œuvres en vue de la récompense éternelle ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXXII. Si quelqu'un dit que les bonnes œuvres d'un homme justifié sont tellement les dons de Dieu, qu'elles ne soient pas aussi les mérites de cet homme justifié ; ou que par ces bonnes œuvres qu'il fait par le secours de la grace de Dieu et par les mérites de Jésus-Christ, dont il est un membre vivant, il ne mérite pas véritablement une augmentation de grace, la vie éternelle, et la possession de cette même vie, pourvu qu'il meure en grace, et même l'augmentation de la gloire ; qu'il soit anathème.

XXXIII. Si quelqu'un dit que par cette doctrine catholique touchant la justification, exposée par le saint concile de Trente dans le présent décret, on déroge en quelque chose à la gloire de Dieu ou aux mérites de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ ; au lieu de reconnoître qu'en effet la vérité de notre foi y est éclaircie, et la gloire de Dieu et de Jésus-Christ y est rendue plus éclatante ; qu'il soit anathème. — *Fleury*, l. cxliii. n. 80.

* Fra Paoli. *Fleury*.

sion were the doctrine of the sacraments, as closely connected with that of justification, and the residence of the clergy ; a matter not yet settled to the satisfaction of the more zealous of the fathers. Several of the congregations which followed were almost wholly occupied with disputes on the latter subject, and on the question of pluralities ; but, in the midst of the discussion, the pope saw fit to transmit an order for submitting all questions of reformation to himself. Such, however, was the temper of the council, that the legates dared not attempt the experiment of making its arrival known.

Excuses, framed with all the wisdom which long experience could give, were not sufficient to preserve the legates from the attacks which they had so much reason to apprehend. Their unwillingness to speak again on the subject either of residence or pluralities, convinced the members of the council that an attempt would be made to prevent the reform which both their consciences, and the clamours of the world, convinced them to be necessary. At the head of the party most active in the pursuit of reformation was Pachéco ; and, when every other mode of appeal had been employed in vain, he united with a numerous body of prelates in drawing up a memorial, which contained the principal demands on which they had resolved perseveringly to insist. Of these the chief were, that dispensations should be abolished ; that the cardinals should be obliged to reside in their dioceses at least six months every year ; that residence should be distinctly declared a divine duty ; that the cardinals should be prohibited, like other bishops, from holding more than one see ; and that all dispensations for the holding of pluralities should be revoked, not only in reference to the future, but in respect to those already granted, unless some just cause of exemption from the law could be proved before the bishop : that unions for life should be set aside as furnishing a pretext for pluralities ; that livings should only be given after the strictest examination ; and that no one should be admitted to the episcopal office till

a rigid inquiry had taken place respecting his life and manners.

A copy of this memorial was immediately despatched to the pontiff, accompanied with the intelligence that the bishops became haughtier every day, treating the cardinals without any respect, and even daring to speak publicly of the necessity of reforming them. "They spare not even the pope himself," it was said, "but venture to declare that he is only playing with words, and that he holds the council simply to amuse the world with a vain hope of reformation." His holiness is then plainly assured, that it would be impossible to keep these proud prelates much longer in subjection, for that they had formed cabals, the power of which was daily on the increase; and that it would be wise to take some decisive step, by publishing a plan of reform at Rome, before the opening of the approaching session. Then reverting to their own situation, the legates speak of the method by which they hoped to master the ambition of their opponents. "It is necessary," say they, "that we should remain firm, for otherwise the faction will gain by force what we are unwilling to accord out of good will, and so make themselves the masters. Whatsoever, therefore, may happen, we must not yield; but, if the bishops remain equally firm to their purpose, we shall be obliged to come to the vote, and shall then require all the assistance that can be rendered us, and especially the return of the bishops, who have left us to go to Venice." *

Consternation seized the pope and his court on the receipt of this epistle. The mode of defence suggested by the legates was such as, in the high and palmy days of Rome's unshaken fortresses, would have become the spirit of its policy; but now there was peril of every such experiment on the feelings of its censors. A too bold resistance might provoke attempts still more hostile; and in the moment of asserting its right to supreme control, it might receive a blow that

* Fleury, l. cxliv. n. 10. Fra Paoli.

would be fatal both to its power and to its dignity. The latter consideration prevailed ; and the legates were directed to make such concessions as the circumstances of the times seemed to demand ; a very different kind of instruction to that which appeared in the earlier answers of the pope to the inquiries of his ministers.

The cardinal del Monte received these directions of the pontiff with less pleasure than might have been expected, standing as he did in the midst of suspicious and angry opponents. But permission to concede was not what he desired ; and he assumed for himself higher ground than the advisers of the pope at Rome, or his colleague Cervin, deemed it prudent to attempt to occupy. He was, however, not less politic than bold, and refused not any labour which might enable him to effect his purpose. The bishops were expected from Venice without delay ; and in the mean time he laid his plans so cautiously, that a large portion of those whose opinions were still doubtful, allured by his exhortations, his promises, or threats, agreed to support him when their votes should be necessary. They were true to their word, and del Monte triumphed in the first general congregation held after the receipt of the pope's letter.

The seventh session of the council was opened on the 3d of March, with the usual solemnities. As soon as the members had taken their places, the decree on the sacraments was read ; and, in thirty propositions, each accompanied by an anathema, the Roman church declared its belief on this all-important subject. The first anathema is directed against those who say that the sacraments of the new law have not been all instituted by Christ ; or that there are more or less than seven, namely, — baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penitence, extreme unction, orders, and marriage ; or that any one of these is not properly and truly a sacrament : the second refers to those who affirm, that the sacraments of the new law are only different from those of the old law in this, that the outward ceremonies

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and practices are different; the third, to another class, who assert that the seven sacraments are so equal, that no one can be said to be more honourable than the other; the fourth regards those who say that the sacraments are not necessary to salvation, and that the grace of justification may be obtained without them by faith alone; the fifth is against those who affirm that they have only been admitted for the sake of faith; the sixth, to those who deny that the sacraments contain the grace of which they are the sign; or that they give not this grace to those who do not oppose their influence, as if they were only external signs of justice, or of grace, received by faith, or simple marks by which the faithful are distinguished from the world: in the seventh, they are condemned who deny that God always gives grace in the sacraments, even if they be received with attention to all the requisite conditions, but affirm that this grace is only given sometimes, or to some persons; the eighth is directed against those who say that the sacraments confer not grace by their own efficacy, but that faith alone suffices to procure it; the ninth, against such as affirm that the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and orders impress no character, that is, leave no spiritual and imperishable mark, which render it impossible that these sacraments should be re-administered; and the tenth is against those who pretend, that any Christian has a right to preach the word of God, and administer the sacraments.

In the next three anathemas are respectively condemned the errors of those who say that the intention of doing what the church does is not required in persons who administer the sacraments; of those who assert that the minister who is guilty of some deadly sin does not in reality perform or confer the sacrament, although he, in every respect, attends to the due performance of the rites; and, lastly, of such as say, that the ceremonies which have been approved by the church, and which are employed in the solemn administration of

the sacraments, may be omitted without sin, according to the will of the minister, or that they may be changed by the pastor.

Such are the anathemas contained in the decree as far as it relates generally to the sacrament. They are followed by others, directed against particular errors on the nature of baptism and confirmation. Under the former head, they are anathematised who assert that the church of Rome, the mother and mistress of all churches, holds not the true doctrine concerning baptism. A similar curse is pronounced on such as deny the efficacy of baptism administered by heretics, in the name of the Trinity, and with the intention of doing what the church does ; or who say that baptism is not necessary to salvation ; or, that a man baptized cannot, even should he desire it, lose the grace conferred, whatever sin he commits, unless he wishes not to believe ; or, that infants baptized ought not to be put into the number of the faithful, because of their inability to perform acts of faith ; that they should be rebaptized when they come to years of maturity ; and that it would be better not to baptize them while infants.

In the part of the decree which respects confirmation, the first anathema is directed against those who deny it to be a sacrament ; the second, against such as affirm that those who attribute any virtue to the unction of confirmation dishonour the Holy Spirit ; and the third, against those who pretend that priests, as well as bishops, are the ordinary ministers of the rite of confirmation.*

* The word *ordinary* was introduced into this canon, it is observed, in order to prevent the appearance of condemning those who considered that the bishop might give a species of delegated authority to priests for the performance of this rite ; a practice not uncommon in the Greek church. (Fleury, l. cxliv. n. 19.) Bingham mentions several canons which were passed to fix the power of confirming as the special privilege of the episcopal order ; but instances some cases in which a power was given to the presbyter to perform a part of the office. Thus, in the Roman church, the unction, or consignation, was twofold, — that on the forehead, and that of the other parts of the body ; and, where this practice prevailed, the presbyter took a part of the duty. Pope Innocent introduced the custom, and divided the performance of the rite between the two orders, if anointing immediately after baptism may be considered in the light of confirmation : but, even in this instance, it was especially reserved to the bishop to anoint the forehead, and to complete the ordinance by imposition of hands. In the Eastern church, the whole of the rite was performed by the bishops ;

These canons on the sacraments were followed by the decree of reformation ; which being read and admitted, the fathers separated, with the intention of speedily reassembling in congregation. They met again at the end of ten days ; when, to the alarm of many, and the ill-concealed indignation of others, the legates announced that they had been made acquainted with the rapid progress of a pestilential disease in the town and neighbourhood, and that they had, therefore, resolved to translate the council to some safer and more healthy place. This announcement they justified by the testimony of two physicians, the one the attendant of the cardinal del Monte, the other the physician to the council.* The murmurs of the Spanish prelates, the doubts and questions as to the existence of any authority for the translation of the council, which sat on every tongue, were answered by Del Monte, almost before expressed : — “ I could have removed,” said he, “ the council from the first, if I had chosen ;” and he immediately drew forth a bull given him by the pope, and authorising him to take this step whenever he saw fit.

This did not appease the anger of Pachéco and his party. Diligent inquiries were made as to the nature and progress of the decree, of which so much had been said. The result was, that no proper cause for alarm, seemed to exist: only two persons had died in the course of several weeks, and they were unaffected with any disease which had the slightest appearance of infection. But the legates had taken their determination, and were not to be moved by these representations. The translation of the council promised them many advantages, — time to form further plans of resistance to the rising spirit of reform ; some relaxation from their

but it is shown by the practice of the church at Alexandria, that the bishop did occasionally give the power of confirming to his presbyters. *Antiquities*, book xi. c. ii. sec. 2.

* This was the celebrated Fracastorio. He is said to have received sixty gold crowns a month from the pope for his attendance on the council ; but no mention is made of this in his life. — *Steidan*, t. ii. . xix. p. 411. Pallavic, lib. ix., c. 13.

continual toil ; and the opportunity of settling the council in a place where communication with Rome might be more rapidly and conveniently carried on.

At the opening of the eighth session on the 11th of March, the cardinal del Monte read the decree of translation ; and the approval of the assembly being demanded, it was confirmed by the votes of thirty-five bishops and three generals of orders. Pachéco opposed the resolution, by arguments full of force and reason. The impropriety of removing the council from one state to another, without the consent of the emperor, was strongly insisted on ; and Bologna, as the place of assembly, was objected to by an open declaration, that it was not sufficiently free from the immediate influence and domination of the pope. To these arguments the legates gave an effectual reply, by again putting the subject to the vote, and numbering among their supporters two thirds of the assembly, the proportion required to establish their right to effect the proposed translation.

The pope received intelligence respecting this bold measure of the legates with not less pleasure than surprise. But the gratification felt at first gradually yielded to fears inspired by the known sentiments of the emperor, and the fact that all the prelates under his control resolutely persevered in their determination to remain at Trent till they should receive his instructions. These fears were greatly augmented when the emperor's ambassador, Vega, presented himself, and with many earnest remonstrances from his master deprecated the precipitate and unjustifiable nature of the late proceeding. The efforts of the papal nuncio did not avail to quiet the emperor's indignation. To his soft and well-worded apologies, his majesty replied, haughtily, that all the reasons alleged for the translation were false and frivolous ; that he would never believe that Paul had had no share in the matter, for that he was an obstinate old man, always following his own headstrong will, and fully set on ruining the church. On the nuncio's endeavouring to

make answer, that the bishops who had left Trent departed of their own accord, Charles quickly replied, "I will not dispute with you on the matter, sir Nuncio : but go and find the bishop of Arras."

No alternative remained for the pontiff, but to reassemble the council at Trent, or delay its proceedings till should better understand the position in which he stood. To take the former course at once would have been inconsistent with his dignity. He, therefore, directed the legates to prorogue the meeting of the council from time to time, or to yield, if they saw fit, to the wishes of the emperor at the earliest becoming opportunity. Del Monte still pursued his favourite system of upholding to the last the dignity and supreme authority of the church. "Tell the emperor and king Ferdinand," said he, "that I would willingly attend to their behests, but the head of the church must yield to no wish but that of promoting the welfare of mankind."

Thus fixed in his resolution, del Monte assembled the fathers of the council on the 15th of September ; and acquainted them that it had been deemed expedient to prorogue the session without fixing any day for resuming its business. By far the greater number of the prelates at Bologna were completely under his influence, and immediately yielded to the proposal of thus terminating their deliberations. The legate had hereby succeeded in freeing himself and the pope from the pressure of immediate difficulties ; but they were both too well aware of the state of parties in the church itself, and of the feelings of the emperor, to enjoy the repose which the cessation of authorised inquiry seemed to promise.

CHAP. XVIII.

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND. — ACTS PASSED BY HENRY VIII. — PERSECUTION. — SUPPRESSION OF MONASTERIES. — EFFORTS OF CRANMER. — EDWARD VI. — ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. — REFORMATION IN FRANCE.

WE turn now to a brief survey of the progress of events, connected with the reformation in other countries. England had been emancipated from the thralldom imposed upon it by Rome, long before the value of divine truth was acknowledged by its princes and nobles. Henry VIII., rejoicing in his dignity as head of the national church, had little in his character corresponding to the feelings of a religious reformer; and so far was he from acknowledging the sublime principle of charity as the only sure foundation of improvement, that he promoted the work of persecution, and the interests of error, with as much zeal as when he acknowledged himself the faithful servant of Rome.

In the month of June, 1536, the opinions of the Lollards, and of the later reformers, were subjected to the examination of the lower house of convocation; and about the same time, Henry himself, exercising his skill as a theologian and his authority as a monarch, presented to the upper house his own views and opinions on the main questions of reformation. The debates, in both cases, were prolonged by the dislike which a large portion of the bishops still felt to the idea of a change, either in doctrine or discipline. Cranmer, on the other hand, pursued his plans with the steady, yet fervent spirit which characterised the best men of his class and station. "Seek for your rule of faith in the simple word of God," was the purport of his arguments; and, as he poured forth his eloquent exposition of the reasons on which he acted, superstition, bigotry, fraud and

malice, seemed to ante-date their doom in the English church.

The first of the articles proposed for acceptance in the convocation would have been a sufficient foundation for the most spiritual system of reform. "Let all bishops and preachers," it said, "teach the people to believe and receive the whole Bible, and the three creeds. Let them interpret whatever doctrine they treat of according to this rule, and condemn whatever is contrary to its intentions, or the precepts of the first four councils." But, in a following article, we read that "Under the forms of bread and wine, exist, truly and substantially, the very same body of Christ that was born of the Virgin Mary:" in another, "that the people were to be instructed, that the use of images is warranted by Scripture; that they were to be warned, indeed, against the superstitious practices of former times, but that they might still offer incense, kneel and worship before them, supposing they were taught to bear in mind, that all this was done in honour of God, and not out of regard to the image itself." On the subject of praying to saints, the instructions were equally opposed to the spirit of protestantism. It was here said that "the people should be taught, that it was good to pray to them to intercede for, and pray with, us." Of ceremonies, it was said, that "the mystical signification, if rightly interpreted, served to recall our feelings, and raise our thoughts, to God." Thus it is taught, that the sprinkling of holy water is to remind us of our baptism, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; that the giving of holy bread is a pathetic sign of the sacrament, and of our union in Christ; that bearing candles on Candlemas-day betokens the character of Christ, as the light which should come into the world; that sprinkling ashes on Ash-Wednesday is happily emblematical of our mortality; and bearing palms on Palm-Sunday, of our wish to receive Christ into the heart now, as aforetime he was received into Jerusalem. Under the head of purgatory, we read, that, "as due order of charity requireth, and

the book of Maccabees, and divers ancient doctors, plainly show, that it is a very good and charitable deed to pray for souls departed; and, forasmuch also as such usage hath continued in the church so many years, even from the beginning, we will that all bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge, that no man ought to be grieved with the continuance of the same, and that it standeth with the very order of charity, for a Christian man to pray for souls departed, and to commit them in our prayers to God's mercy; and also to cause others to pray for them in masses and exequies, and to give alms to others to pray for them, whereby they may be relieved and holpen of some part of their pain."

But strong as is the language here employed, the qualifying sentences which follow show plainly, that already was the axe laid to the root of the tree, and that it required but a brief period of further exertion on the part of scriptural divines to shake the whole mass of superincumbent error. "Forasmuch," it is said, "as the place where they be, the name thereof, and kinds of pain also, be to us uncertain in Scripture, therefore this, with all other things, we remit to Almighty God, unto whose mercy it is meet and convenient for us to commend them, trusting that God accepteth our prayers for them, referring the rest wholly to God, to whom is known their state and condition; therefore it is necessary that such abuses be clearly put away, which, under the name of purgatory, have been advanced, as to make men believe that, through the bishop of Rome's pardon, souls might clearly be delivered out of purgatory, and all the pains of it; or that masses said at 'Scala cœli,' or otherwise, in any place, or before any image, might likewise deliver them from all their pain, and send them straight to Heaven."*

Another remarkable feature in these articles, was the mention of only three ordinances of religion, namely,

* Records. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 171.

baptism, penance, and the Lord's Supper, as sacraments; a circumstance the more worthy of attention, as the decree of the council of Trent, passed some time after, so strongly marks the feeling of the Roman church on this subject. A change, therefore, of doctrine, as well as of polity and discipline, was commenced. The people beheld their rulers shrinking from the task of upholding a system, every part of which had been pronounced holy; and it is easy to conceive that the effect of such a state of things must, for the time, have been as dangerous to those who only sought excuses for impiety, as it was full of promise to those who contemplated the speedy settlement of every doubt, and the dissipation of the clouds of error, by the benign influence of the pure word of God.

The publication of the Bible in English, and the king's licence permitting persons of every class to read it, marked the progress which continued to be made towards the attainment of this devoutly hoped for triumph. To secure to the people in general the advantage of drinking at the fountain-head of knowledge, every minister of a parish was directed to place an English Bible in his church, and to exhort the people to read it, as the word of God, and as deserving the entire assent of their hearts to its precepts and revelations.

Henry permitted religion thus to advance; but, if ill-curbed passions, if pride and tyranny, and a willingness to shed blood, are proofs that a man is not acting under the influence of the Divine Spirit, he merited no other praise for all he did, than that which might be claimed for any blind instrument of good, in the hands of God's providence. Scarcely had the Bible been set up in the churches throughout the country, when one of those crimes were perpetrated which we might have hoped would never have been seen in the land, after the king, the priest, and the people, had acknowledged, in common, that the Bible alone is infallible. The doctrine of the real presence was still professed by Henry, as founded on the old interpretation of Scripture; but it was not his continued belief in this article of the

Roman catholic creed which made him, or has ever made any man, forget the duty of charity, and break down all the defences of human liberty and safety. This has, in every instance, been the consequence of an unholy mistrust of God's power to support his gospel by means corresponding to its nature, aided by a pride and selfishness, which rejoice to find so complete a method as that of religious persecution for the attainment of their ends.

Among the small number of English reformers who entertained the opinions taught by the divines of Switzerland, was John Lambert, a man of learning, and exemplary character. Deeply impressed with the importance of forming correct views on the eucharist, he could not refrain from questioning Dr. Taylor, after hearing him preach on the subject, as to the foundations of some of his arguments. It was not long before the report of his opinions, as he himself had described them, became matter of consideration to Cranmer, and others of that party. The unjustifiable zeal of Luther against the dogmas of Zuingle has been often stated in this work ; and, unhappily for the interests of religion, the feeling which prompted Luther to suppose that Heaven could not contain himself and Zuingle, seems to have infected the minds of many of his followers. There is every reason to believe that such men as Cranmer and his associates would have proceeded to no act of cruelty against an amiable and simple-minded scholar like Lambert ; but while they pressed him closely with their intreaties that he would recant, he appealed to the king, and thus took it out of their power either to punish or release him.

Henry, at all times ready to display his power or ability as a theologian, resolved to employ it now as the head of the church, and determine the nature of heresy, as well as punish it by his power as a magistrate. The trial of Lambert took place in Westminster Hall ; the court, with a vast concourse of the dignified clergy and nobility, attending in honour of the king. Cranmer, and the other bishops, assisted the monarch in

the conduct of the argument ; and whatever may be said respecting the difficulty of their position, they certainly did not add to their claims on the veneration of mankind, when they sat complacently and unmoved, while a humble-minded believer in the Bible was oppressed by a haughty judge, and at length condemned to die because he would not retract a confession of belief, derived, he was assured, from the pages of revelation.

Lambert did honour to his party by the humble firmness which characterised his conduct. When borne down by a torrent of mingled sophistry and invective, he resigned himself to his fate, and contented himself with saying, that "he committed his soul to God, and his body to the king's clemency." He found no mercy at the hands of the sovereign. A cruel sentence consigned him to the flames ; and it was executed in the most barbarous manner.

For a brief period, the terrors of this persecution lay heavy on the hearts of the few who had formed evangelical views on the doctrine of the eucharist, and on the nature of Christian liberty, as taught by the word of God. The introduction of a bill into parliament in 1539, for the settling of doctrine, fixed the attention of both parties in the nation on the most disputed points in the several systems of belief. Cranmer laboured strenuously to prevent any opinion being established contrary to the confession of Augsburg. The archbishop of York, the bishop of London, with a powerful party, now headed by the king, sought, on the other hand, to revive the creed as it formerly stood. In the bill, therefore, laid before parliament, the tendencies to papal doctrine were clearly manifest ; nor could the united influence and ability of the the reformers stop its progress through the house. The six articles of which it consists referred to the real presence in the eucharist ; to the giving of it in both kinds to the laity ; to the keeping of the monastic vows of chastity ; to the celebration of private masses ; to the marriage of priests, and auricular confession. These

articles were revived and determined upon as the future rule of the church. The king was rewarded by the thanks of the house for the zeal he had shown in the matter ; and the act concluded with the express declaration, that whoever preached or wrote any thing contrary to the first of the six articles should be condemned as a heretic, and burnt without mercy : that the crime of obstinately disputing against the rest should be adjudged a felony, and punished with death ; and that even a word spoken against them should subject the guilty person to imprisonment during the king's pleasure. To secure the execution of this intolerable law, commissioners and judges were appointed for all parts of the kingdom, whose duty it was to bring the accused to trial before a jury.

Thus did the fickle and reckless Henry VIII. strive to put an end at once to whatever he had effected in the work of reformation. If he could before claim the merit of having destroyed the power of the pope over the national church ; of having given the Bible to the people, and thus assisted them in escaping the oppression of ignorant priests, what right had he now to any praise for this, when, by a single act of parliament, he converted the Bible into a field set with fatal snares to every inquiring mind and tender conscience, and re-established every dogma and practice from which Rome had gathered the worst of its corrupting principles ? The only apology that can be offered for him, is the respect which he still manifested for the character and piety of Cranmer ; the anxiety he evinced to learn his opinions on the late act, and the care which he took of his personal safety when the power of his enemies seemed ready to overwhelm him. But what are we to think of a monarch who, venturing to modify, according to his will, the doctrines of the church, and then passing an act in the face of the nation, denouncing chains and death against those who opposed it, only a few weeks after expresses a wish for the first ecclesiastic in the kingdom, to let him know what can be said against it ?

The influence of the papal party continued to increase. Several bishops, favourers of protestantism, found themselves exposed to imminent danger, not only of degradation, but of imprisonment. Bonner, on the other hand, secured himself and his colleagues in the king's favour, by consenting to act as his commissioner, rather than as an independent bishop. The fall of Cromwell, now earl of Essex, added still further to the strength of their party; and, but for a proclamation in favour of the circulation of the Scriptures, the reformation would have been completely at a stand.

Martyrdoms again began to be frequent. In 1540, Barnes, Gerrard, and Jerome, priests, but Lutherans in doctrine, perished at the stake in Smithfield. Their constancy in suffering gave a deeper and more fervent resolution to many who professed, but dare not openly contend for, the principles of evangelical faith. Similar executions took place in other parts of the kingdom; and the commencement of the reformation in Scotland was marked by the faith and sufferings of the pious and the ennobled Patrick Hamilton, abbot of Ferns.

To render their proceedings the more secure, and remove the almost only remaining obstacle to their hope of placing all things on their former footing, the heads of the papal party now proposed to stop the further circulation of the English Bible. Cranmer trembled at the rising danger. His power was too much abridged to allow of his making a direct resistance. He had, therefore, to employ policy; and having obtained the king's sanction to his views, he induced him to order that the revision of the English Bible should be referred to the universities. Pursuing the advantage thus gained, and choosing for his time of action the breaking out of the war with Scotland, Cranmer urged the monarch with strong and pathetic appeals to modify the enactments which had been made against the reformers. He so far succeeded as not only to establish the right of all the educated classes to read the Scriptures, but to prevent the judges of heresy

from condemning a spiritual person to death, till after three convictions, or a layman to heavier punishments than imprisonment and confiscation of property. About the same time also, the book entitled "The Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man" was drawn up by the archbishop and his associates; a work which measures with great exactness the proportions of truth and error, that existed among the churchmen of the age.*

Nor were the prelates of the opposite party indifferent to the improvement of either the clergy or the people, if we may give any credit to the statement which ascribes to Bonner the admonitions contained in such passages of advice as these:—

"We exhort you," it is said, "in the first place, that every one of you shall, with all diligence and faithful obedience, observe and keep the king's ordinances. That every parson, vicar, and curate shall read over, and diligently study every day one chapter of the Bible, and that with the gloss ordinary, or some other doctor, or expositor, approved and allowed in this church of England, proceeding from chapter to chapter, from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew to the end of the New Testament; and the same so diligently studied, to keep still and retain in memory, and to come to the rehearsal and recital thereof, at all such time and times as they, or any of them, shall be commanded thereunto by me or my deputies. That every one of you do procure and provide of your own a book, called 'The Institution of a Christian Man', otherwise called the 'Bishops' Book'; and that ye, and every one of you, do exercise yourselves in the same, according to the precepts given you. That ye, every one of you that be parsons, vicars, curates, and also chauntry priests and stipendiaries, do instruct, teach, and bring up in learning, the best ye can, all such children of your parishioners, as shall come to

* Burnet gives an earlier date to the publication of this book, but is corrected by his learned editor, Dr. Nares; who observes, that it was only certain questions concerning the sacraments which obtained attention at this time. *Hist. of Reform.*, t. i. p. 470.

you for the same ; or at least to teach them to read English, taking moderately therefore of their friends that be able to pay, so that they may thereby the better learn and know how to believe, how to pray, how to live according to God's pleasure. That every curate do at all times his best diligence to stir, move and reduce such as be at discord, to peace, love, charity, and are to remit and forgive one another, as often howsoever they shall be grieved or offended ; and that the curate show and give example thereof, when and as often as any variance or discord shall happen to be between him and any of his cure. That all priests shall take this order when they preach : — first, they shall not rehearse sermons made by other men within this 200 or 300 years ; but when they preach, they shall take the gospel or epistle of the day, which they shall recite and declare to the people plainly, distinctly, and sincerely, from the beginning to the end thereof, and then to desire the people to pray with them for grace, after the usage of the church of England now used : and that done, we will that every preacher shall declare the same gospel or epistle, or both, even from the beginning, not after his own mind, but after the mind of some catholic doctor allowed in this church of England ; and in no wise to affirm any thing, but that which he shall be able always to show in some ancient writer : and in no wise to make rehearsal of any opinion not allowed, for the intent to reprove the same ; but to leave that for those who are and shall be admitted to preach by the king's majesty, or by me, the bishop of London, your ordinary, or by mine authority. In the which epistle and gospel, ye shall note and consider diligently certain godly and devout places, which may incense and stir hearers to obedience of good works and prayers. And in case any notable ceremony, used to be observed in the church, shall happen that day when any preaching shall be appointed, it shall be meet and convenient that the preacher declare and set forth to the people, the true

meaning of the same, in such sort that the people may perceive thereby what is meant and signified by such ceremony ; and also know how to use and accept it to their own edifying. Furthermore, that no preacher shall rage or rail in his sermon ; but boldly, discreetly, and charitably open, declare, and set forth the excellency of virtue ; and, to suppress the abomination of vice, every preacher shall, if time and occasion will serve, instruct and teach his audience what prayer is used in the church that day, and for what thing the church prayeth specially that day, to the intent that all the people may pray together with one heart for the same ; and, as occasion will serve, to show and declare to the people what the sacraments signify, what strength and efficacy they be of, how every man should use them reverently and devoutly at the receiving of them : and to declare wherefore the mass is to be so highly esteemed and honoured, with all the circumstances pertaining to the same. Let every preacher beware that he do not feed his audience with any fable, or other histories, other than he can avouch and justify to be written by some allowed writer. And when he hath done all he will say and utter for that time, he shall then, in few words, recite again the pith and effect of his whole sermon, and add thereunto as he shall see good."

Such were the instructions which went under the name of Bonner. They afford us a valuable illustration of the state of the clergy at this time, and of the feeling which prevailed as to the essential duties of a properly constituted ministry. For many ages past, the clergy had acted as if they regarded the whole of their duty performed when they went through the liturgies of the day, and received a confession. Now they were informed that they must not only lead the people in the offering up of prayers, but instruct them from the pulpit, and watch over the education of their children. This change was the necessary consequence of the activity to which men's minds were roused by the circulation of the Scriptures, and the agitation of questions so important

to their salvation as those now daily proposed. There can be little need of preachers when people are taught to believe that the church is willing to be responsible for their souls, if they render it obedience and support. Inquiry then becomes an impertinence. The promise is given to an implicit confidence in the dictator, not to a faith which cometh by hearing, and knowledge of the word of God. But let the church give up its claims to the power of absolving sins, or reconciling souls to Heaven which know nothing of the goodness of God, or the mystery of salvation, but what they learn by dictation and what they remember without thought; let it acknowledge that the living Spirit of the divine word must itself impart the light and nourishment which are needed, and then it will be found that the comparing of things spiritual with spiritual, the bringing forth of things new and old, is necessary to render the language of the teacher persuasive, and satisfy the new desires of the heart. No longer assured of safety in the use of external signs, it yearns for knowledge to fill up the void of which, the moment its present confidence departs, it becomes too sadly sensible. And to whom shall it look in this case, but to those who are accredited ministers and dispensers of heavenly truth? Or what will it so gladly receive from their lips, as the evidence of divine realities, furnished by the harmony of revelation, and its cloud of witnesses? *

We have spoken, in another place, of the sermons of Luther. They were eminently simple, and abounded with demonstrations of doctrine. His example was of immense worth to the divines of Germany at the beginning of the reformation, leading them at once from the miserably defective models furnished in the school of catholicism, but warning them, at the same time, against falling into the wild and wanton style of the anabaptists, or the less serious of their own sect. In England, the preachers of the reformation had not so mighty a mind to subdue and guide them. Each was

* Records. Burnet, book iii. p. xxvi.

left at liberty to adopt his own style, and speak according to his natural temper, or the influence which time, place, and circumstance, exercised on his feelings. Bishop Latimer, the most celebrated and the most energetic of preachers at this period, delighted in a freedom of expression which often leaves a painful feeling on the mind of a modern reader. But he spoke of things which his whole heart despised, of truths which he was willing to seal at any moment with his blood. Thus, in one of his sermons preached at St. Paul's, he burst forth into an accusation of the prelates of his age, which must have made the heart of the boldest quake: "Unpreaching prelates" said he, "are so troubled with lordly living; they be so pleased in palaces, couched in courts, ruffelying in their rents, dancing in their dominions, burthened with ambassages, pampering of their paunches, mounching in their mangers, and merilying in their gay manners and mansions, and so troubled with loitering in their lordships, that they cannot attend to it. They are otherwise occupied: some in the king's matters, some are ambassadors, some of the privy council, some to furnish the court; some are lords of parliament, some are presidents, and some comptrollers of mints. Well, well! is this their duty? Is this their office? Is this their calling? I would fain ask who controlleth the devil at home, while the bishop controlleth the mint?"*

This practical application of a moral lesson to known and actual offences, gave a power to the preacher which might be exercised with advantage among the proud and the worldly. But it was by the introduction of topics illustrating the doctrines of justification by faith, of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, that preaching became valuable in the estimation of the people; that it drew such vast crowds about men who at one time had neither churches nor pulpits to preach in, and even to listen to whom was attended with dangers from

* Serm. 1548. p. 17. Burnet.

which most men, in these days of unpractised courage, would shrink with dread.

Cranmer continued to pursue the main objects of reformation, notwithstanding all the opposition which he had daily to encounter. Such was the rage excited against him by the quiet gradual influence of his piety and learning, that a powerful party plotted his ruin, and he was secretly accused of heresy. The king had too much penetration as well as honour to allow the calumniators any chance of success. Cranmer learnt, from the monarch's own lips, the design which had been formed against him ; and the means whereby its authors might be most signally disgraced and punished. He was grateful for the kindness of his sovereign, but refused to take advantage of the opportunity of revenge. This excellent man had a sufficient hold on the affections of Henry to preserve himself, both on this and another similar occasion ; but was not able to prevent a recurrence of the frightful scenes which disgraced the country some years before. In 1546, the zeal which had for a little while slumbered, roused itself against the sacramentarians with increased vigour. Among the first whom it assailed was Nicholas Shanton, bishop of Salisbury, who, having been long imprisoned for some minor offence against orthodoxy, let fall expressions which rendered him suspected of denying the real presence. The bishops of London and Worcester, pitying perhaps his infirmities, but more probably averse to seeing one of their own standing brought to the stake, waited on him in prison, and convinced him, it was said, so clearly of his error, that he not only recanted, but became, in the reign of Mary, one of the foremost to rejoice in the condemnation of his previous associates.

As the mind shrinks humbled and distressed at the contemplation of this old man saving the miserable remains of life by a denial of the truth, it is painfully excited by the sympathies awakened at the awful sufferings and heroic fortitude of the young and accomplished Anne Askew. This remarkable woman, driven

from home by her husband, the moment he suspected her opinions, had been received and cherished by many of the ladies about the court. Her high birth and extraordinary abilities made her an object of general attention ; but the admiration she excited causing inquiry into her history, she was called before the bishop of London, and examined as to her belief in the real presence. The answers she returned, though apparently sufficient to satisfy the demands of the six articles, left some suspicion on the bishop's mind, and she was with difficulty rescued from his hands. Not long after this she was again apprehended, and sent to Newgate. While there she employed herself in composing several devotional pieces and letters ; and, addressing the king on the subject of the eucharist, said, with equal force and caution, that she believed 'as much as Christ had said in it, and as much as the catholic church from him did teach.'

But neither her sex nor her accomplishments weighed with the ruthless persecutors who had selected her as a sacrifice. The lord chancellor himself having ordered her to the Tower, waited to see her fixed to the rack ; and, if report speak true, assisted at the torture with his own hands. Firm and silent amid her excruciating agonies, the unfortunate lady was carried back to prison, and before the pains of the rack had ceased was hurried to the stake. There she had companions in suffering ; and, while the four martyrs were preparing for the flames, the recanted bishop of Salisbury stood and preached to them on the nature of heresy, and the condemnation that awaited it in another world as well as in this.

Another attempt against the safety of Cranmer followed this outbreking of zeal, and the archbishop was again indebted for his safety to the generosity of his sovereign. The object of the cabal was to see him safely confined in the Tower ; and such was the noble simplicity of Cranmer's character that he expressed no wish to escape the trial to which his enemies would have exposed him. " You

fool," said the king, on hearing him thus express himself, "do you think, if you were once in prison, that there would not be abundance of false witnesses to accuse you? But, as you do not know how to take care of yourself, I must look to it for you."

Henry appears to have enjoyed an occasion of putting the enemies of Cranmer to confusion, for he again laid the plan by which he was to escape from their hands, and leave them ridiculously struggling in the toils of their own net. Giving Cranmer the ring off his finger, he told him to attend the summons which would be sent him the next morning from the privy council; and to use the signet as he saw fit. The summons was sent as the king had said, and Cranmer attended the call. Strange, however, had been the effect of his expected disgrace on the feelings of the council. Instead of being admitted at once, and as he might have demanded in virtue of his own dignity, he was left standing in the antechamber, obtaining no greater respect than would have been shown to his domestic. While he was thus waiting the pleasure of the lords of council, the king's physician happened to pass by, and observing, with equal scorn and indignation, the insult endured by so inestimable a prelate, he hastened to the king, and spoke of it in terms which roused Henry's anger to the highest pitch. A messenger was accordingly sent to the council, desiring that Cranmer might be admitted without delay. He was not left long in suspense respecting the nature of the charge against him. "You and your chaplains," said they, "are the authors of all the heresies in the kingdom." Cranmer listened patiently to the lengthened accusation, and, on their intimating that he would be sent to the Tower, humbly expressed his hope, that, as he had so long occupied a place among them at the council-table, they would allow him the indulgence of being brought face to face with his accusers. A rude and angry answer being returned, Cranmer immediately said, "I must appeal, then, my lords, from you to the king; and, as he spoke, presented the royal signet. The coun-

cil was thrown into indescribable confusion by this unexpected demonstration of influence still enjoyed by the archbishop ; and its members, instead of waiting to pursue their charge, hastened precipitately to the king to provide for their own protection against his just, and now not concealed, indignation. " I thought," said he, " that I had had a wiser council." Then, laying his hand on his breast, he added, " By the faith I owe to God, if ever prince owed a debt of gratitude to a subject, I owe one to Cranmer."

Such were the mingled discomfitures and triumphs of the English reformers to the conclusion of Henry's reign. But if they had much to endure, if they had to contemplate with sorrowful feelings the slow progress of improvement and religious liberty, the Roman catholic party had evils of a worse nature to sustain. The protestants, amidst all their griefs, might clearly discern the vigour of a youthful principle in the bosom of their little community. They had every thing to hope for. However persecuted, they were, in reality, the assailants ; and, such is the provision of a bountifully endowed nature, the instinctive hopefulness of the heart when making a great effort, that they might discern through the darkness of the present, the gradually increasing means of future good. The catholics, on the other hand, experienced all the terrors which conscious weakness and error of system are so calculated to inspire. They had hourly to contend against a people who challenged them to a species of inquiry for which they were ever unprepared ; and grand and imposing as might be the venerable visions which arose at the bidding of the devouter members of the church, to the worldly and ambitious the only prospect presented must have been that of ruin and decay.

But it was not a prospective or theoretical view of affairs that tended to inspire the English Roman catholics with fear. At an early part of the period, to the principal events in which we have alluded, Henry VIII. began to regard the richly endowed abbeys, and other

religious institutions of the land, with the eye of a monarch, rather than with the devout feeling of a true son of the church. We have mentioned, in the History of the Christian Church, St Antony's prophecy, that monks, he feared, would soon begin to love large houses, and the other apparatus of luxury. His fears were too well realised; and, of all the classes of mankind, the members of monastic institutions in later days were those, perhaps, who had the fewest cares or troubles with which to contend.

The wealth amassed by the several fraternities in England, the proverbial pride and sensuality of the monks, the doubtful character of too many of the convents, had destroyed much of that sentiment of respect which the people had felt in earlier times for the inmate of the cell. It is well and becoming, in the busy children of the world, to look with respect on those who are believed to have strength and purity of spirit sufficient to resist its temptations of pleasure or ambition, and to leave all it can offer for communion with their souls and with God: but if the love of solitude is proved to have no other foundation than sloth, or, if it be discovered that the pleasures of the world are only seemingly given up, that they may in reality be the more securely enjoyed, mankind, enraged at the reproofs they have received from the mouths of hypocrites, and disgusted at the cheat, will readily join in abridging privileges so unworthily and uselessly enjoyed. But, if the spoliation be itself begun from suspected motives; if it be the work of tyranny, or be conducted with a cruel forgetfulness of individual suffering, it is more likely that the sympathies of the people will remain with the sufferers, than that their zeal for reformation will coincide with that of the ruler.

Henry issued his instructions for the survey of religious houses in 1536; and rarely have the commissioners of a government been endowed with powers so arbitrary or inquisitorial. Thus, on entering the house, they were to inquire to what order, rule, or religion it pertained;

and, having been satisfied on this point, were to enjoin the superior to appear, without delay, before the chancellor of the augmentations of the revenues of the king's crown, and the council. Their next inquiry was to be, "What number of persons of religion were in the house, and the conversation of their lives; and how many of them were priests; and how many would go to other religious houses of the same kind? How many would take capacities; and how many servants or hinds the same house kept commonly; and what other persons had their living there?" No species of property was to be left unnoticed in the inventory: the weight of the lead on the roof, and of the bells in the belfry; the plate, jewels, ornaments, money, household stuff, and chattels of every other kind, were to be diligently examined and described. In the directions respecting the lands belonging to the establishment, the governor is forbidden to receive any rents for the future till the king's pleasure should be known, "except such as must needs be had for their necessary food and sustenance, or for payment of their servants' wages." *

* "We came," say the visitors, "to Glastenbury on Friday last, about ten of the clock in the forenoone: and for that the abbot was then at Sharpham, a place of hys, a myle and somewhat more from the abbey, we, without any delay, went unto the same place, and there, after certain communication declaring unto him the effect of our coming, examined him upon certain articles. And for that his answer was not then to our purpose, we advised him to call to his remembrance that which he had as then forgotten, and so declare the truth. And then came with him the same day to the abbey; and there of new proceeded that night to search his study for letters and books; and found in his study, secretly laid, as well a written book of arguments, against the divorce of his king's majestie and the lady dowager, which we take to be a great matter, as also divers pardons, copies of bulls, and the counterfit lyfe of Thomas Bequet in print. But we could not find any letter that was materiall. And so we proceeded again to his examination, concerning the articles we received from your lordship, in the answers whereof, as we take it, shall appear his canker'd and traiterous heart and mind against the king's majestie, and his succession; as by the same answers, syned with his hand, and sent to your lordship by this bearer, more plainly shall appear. And so, with as fair words as we could, we have conveyed him from hence into the Tower, being but a very weak man, and sickly. And, as yet, we have neither discharged servant nor monk; but now, the abbot being gone, we will, with as much celerity as we may, proceed to the dispatching of them. We have in money, 300*l*. and above; but the certainty of plate, and other stuffe there, as yet we know not, for we have not had opportunity for the same, but shortly we intend (God willing) to proceed to the same; whereof we shall ascertain your lordship, so shortly as we may. This also to advertise your lordship, that we have found a fair chalice of gold, and divers

Having giving these directions concerning the disposition of the property, the royal reformer considers in the next place the manner of providing for the members of the establishment thus about to be driven from their home. "The commissioners," say the instructions, "are to send such of the religious persons that will remain in the same religion, to some other great house of the same religion, by their discretion, with a letter to a governor for the receipt of them; and the residue of them that will go to the world, to send them to my lord of Canterbury, and the lord chancellor for their capacities, with the letter of the same commissioner." It is further directed that the commissioners should give the persons who would have capacities some reasonable rewards, according to the distance of the place, to be appointed by their discretion: and to send the governor to the court of augmentations, from which he was to receive a pension for life. On these instructions the commissioners acted, it seems, with a zeal of which the king could make no reasonable complaint. The smaller convents were the first suppressed.* Near 10,000 persons, it is com-

other parcels of plate, which the abbot had hid secretly from all such commissioners, as have bene there in times past; and as yet he knoweth not that we have found the same. Whereby we think, that he thought to make his hand by his untruth to his king's majestie. It may please your lordship to advertise us of the king's pleasure, by this bearer, to whom we shall deliver the custody and keeping of the house, with such stuff as we intend to leave there, convenient to the king's use. We assure your lordship, it is the goodliest house of that sort that ever we have seen. We wold that your lordship did know it, as we do; then we doubt not but your lordship would judge it a house mete for the king's majesty, and for no man else, which is to our great comfort; and we trust verily, that there shall never come any double hood within that house again. Also this is to advertise your lordship, that there is never a one doctor within that house; but there be three batchelors of divinity, which be but meanly learned, as we can perceive." — *Records*.

* These smaller convents were such as had not a revenue of more than 200*l.* per annum; and, in the preamble to the act for their suppression, it is said that, efforts having been long made in vain for their reformation, the king thought it would be better, and more for the honour of God, to use and convert their income to more useful purposes.

Fuller says, "The small houses, like little fishes, could not be caught with the net of reformation, as slipping through the holes thereof, and therefore no way to suppress their faults except by suppressing their foundation. All I will add is, God first punished great Sodom, and spared little Zoar, though probably also in fault: here Zoar was first punished. Let great Sodom beware, and the larger monasteries look to themselves." — *History of Abbeyes*.

monly reported, were left without a shelter, or the means of existence by the dissolution thus rapidly effected. Their fate was truly such as might claim the sympathy of the nation. They could not properly be charged with the evils of a system which began to be corrupt ages before they lived; nor was it to be supposed that any very large proportion of the number had been guilty of the crimes charged upon some of the more conspicuous offenders. But, whatever their errors, or their corruptions, they now presented themselves to the people, poor, destitute, and without having where to lay their heads. Their misery was not feigned; their humility and squalid looks were no longer the garb of hypocrisy, whatever they might have been in the days gone by. The tale they told, therefore, sunk deep into the hearts of the hearers; and the first awakenings of sympathy were soon followed by anger and resentment against the authors of such distress.

The indignation excited by the mere spectacle of the wretched monks was greatly increased by the mode in which their lands and houses, and other property, were disposed of; it being supposed that the vast sums which they produced would be employed only to fill the coffers of the king, or supply his favourites with the means of more safely indulging in luxury and riot. Even Henry, arbitrary as he was, trembled at the rising storm; and, by the advice of his ministers, adopted the best means that could be devised for calming the public excitement. By a stroke of policy, which deserves credit for its refinement, he sold many of the lands and buildings to private gentlemen, who thence became involved in the obligation of defending, not merely the estates which they received, but, the principle on which they were seized. The consciences of men are not usually in their tenderest moments when tempted by the prospect of wealth; and, in these cases, there were the precedents of Wolsey, and Audley, the speaker in the house of commons, to aid the arguments of self-interest. Fatal, indeed, had been the example given by these great men. "It shook,"

says the old historian, “ the freehold of all abbeys,” for both had been lord chancellors in their time ; both were well versed in cases of conscience ; and who could object when, of the two, “ the one, a *divine*, *first took*, and the other, a lawyer, *first received* such lands, into his possession ? ” This measure, however, was not sufficient, of itself, to quiet the murmurs of the nation. The poverty of the expelled monks demanded relief ; and the poor, who had been almost maintained by the monasteries, were, if possible, in a still lower degree of wretchedness. These claimants on the justice of the king were silenced, in part, by his making them pensioners on the newly confiscated estates. When the sale of the larger abbeys put him in possession of still greater resources, he formed plans which while they ameliorated the condition of the individuals who suffered by the suppression, induced the nation to believe that some effectual good might be obtained through the changes that had occurred. While fifteen abbeys and sixteen nunneries were given back to charity and religion by a royal grant, the revenues of others were set apart for erecting new bishoprics and schools of learning ; thereby fulfilling, though only to a small extent, the professed purpose contemplated in the suppression of these antient establishments.*

* Fuller enumerates, with arithmetical particularity, the benefits which Henry conferred, as a balance to his oppressive exactions. His list forms the best apology the monarch could put forth : —

“ We would not weed king Henry’s actions in his dissolving of abbeys, so as onely to mark the miscarriages and misdemeanours therein. Come we to consider, what commendable deeds this king did raise on the ruines of monasteries.

“ First, he politically increased the revenues of the crown and dutchie of Lancaster (on which he bestowed the rich abbey of Fourness in that county) with annexing much land thereto, and erecting the Court of Augmentations (whereof largely hereafter) for the more methodicall managing thereof ; though (alas !) what the crown possessed of abbey-land, was nothing to what he passed away. Surely, had the revenues of monasteries been entirely kept up, and paid into the exchequer, there to make an *Erarium Sacrum*, or publick treasure, it is questionable whether the same had been more for the ease of the subject, or use and honour of the soveraigne.

“ Secondly, he piously founded five bishopricks *de novo* (besides one at Westminster, which continued not) where none had been before. For, though antiently there had been a bishop’s seat at Chester for a short time, yet it was then no better than the summer-house of the bishop of Lichfield (onely during the life of one Peter living there), which now was solemnly made a bishoprick for succession, and four others, namely : —

By these, and similar means the clamours of the nation were subdued, but not altogether silenced. There

<i>Bishop's Sec.</i>	<i>Diocese assigned it.</i>	<i>Taken from the Bishoprick of.</i>
1. Oxford.	1. Oxfordshire.	1. Lincolne.
2. Bristol.	2. Dorset, and some part of Gloucester-shire.	2. Salisbury.
3. Peterborough.	3. Northampton-shire and Rutland.	3. Lincolne.
4. Gloucester.	4. Gloucester-shire, the rest.	4. Worcester.
5. Chester.	5. Chester, Lancaster, and Richmond-shire.	5. Lichfield and York.

Such who honour *prelacy* must acknowledge these new foundations of the king's for a worthy work. Those also of contrary judgment, will thus farre forth approve his act, because, had he otherwise expended these abbey-lands, and not continued them to our times in these new bishopricks, they had not been in being, by their late sale, to supply the commonwealth.

"Thirdly, Where he found a prior and monks belonging to any antient cathedral church, there he converted the same into a dean and prebendaries, as in —

1. Canterbury.	3. Elie.	5. Worcester.	7. Duresme.
2. Winchester.	4. Norwich.	6. Rochester.	8. Carlile.

I dare not say, that he entirely assigned (though a good authour affirmeth it) all, or the most part of those priorie-lands, to these his new foundations. However, the expression of a late bishop of *Norwich* is complained of as uncial, and untrue, that *king Henry took away the sheep from that cathedral, and did not restore so much as the trotters unto it.*

"Fourthly, He charitably founded many grammar-schools (great need whereof in that age in this land), as in Canterbury, Coventry, Worcester, &c., allowing liberall salaries to the masters and ushers therein, had they been carefully preserved. But sometimes the gifts of a bountifull master shrink in the passage through the hands of a covetous steward.

"Fifthly, He charitably bestowed Gray-friers (now commonly called Christ-Church), and the hospital of S. Bartholomew in London, on that city, for the relief of the poor thereof. For the death of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolke, his beloved brother-in-law, happening the July before, so impressed king Henry with a serious apprehension of his own mortality (such the sympathy of tempers, intimacie of converse, and no great disparity of age betwixt them), that he thought it high time to bethink himself of his end, and to do some good work in order thereunto. Hereupon, on the 13. of January following, anno 1546, he bestowed the said hospitals on the city; a gift afterwards confirmed, and enlarged by king Edward the Sixt.

"Sixtly, He built and endowed the magnificent colledge of Trinity, finished King's-Colledge-Chappell in Cambridge, and founded professors' places for languages, physick, law, and divinity, in both universities; as in the proper place thereof shall hereafter largely appear.

"Seventhly, He employed John Leland, a most learned antiquary, to perambulate and visit the ruines of all abbeys, and record the memorables therein. It seems, though the buildings were destroyed, king Henry would have the builders preserved, and their memories transmitted to posterity. This task Leland performed with great pains, to his great praise, on the king's purse, who exhibited most bountifully unto him; as himself confesseth in these his Latine verses: —

"Antè suos Phœbus radios ostendere mundo
Desinet, et claras Cynthia pulchra faces:
Antè fluet rapidum tacitis sine piscibus æquor,
Spinifer et nullam tacitis habebit avem,

was one circumstance, however, which prevented that wide extension of evil, which usually follows the sudden depression of any class of society. The 10,000 monks and nuns turned out upon the world, had no ties to connect their misery with a future age, or other portions of their fellow-creatures. They were alone in the world ; and the recollection of their sufferings and complaints would pass away in a few years, leaving the world uninjured by their distresses.

The death of Henry, in 1537, opened a wide prospect of success and happiness to the English reformers. His reign will ever be memorable as the era of an event, the greatest in the history of the Christian world. The circumstances of his life conspired with peculiarities of individual character to give him a personal interest in the change. He obeyed the impulse which he felt, but not the hand of Providence held out to be his guide. The glory, therefore, of establishing the reformation in this land was not allowed him ; but, having prepared the materials for the edifice, he left it to his successor to raise the structure, and enjoy the blessings which posterity has been willing to bestow on such a work.

Edward VI. exhibited from earliest youth a gentle and docile disposition. The chief director of his studies

Antè sacre quercus cessabunt spargere ramos,
 Floraque sollicitâ pingere prata manu :
 Quàm, rex dive, tuum labatur pectore nostro
 Nomen, quod studiis portus, et aura, meis.'

"9. This Leland, after the death of king Henry the Eighth, his bountifull patron, fell distracted, and so died ; uncertain whether his braines were broken with weight of worke, or want of wages ; the latter more likely, because, after the death of king Henry, his endeavours met not with proportionable encouragement.

"10. He maintained many learned youths on great cost and charges, in all foraigne courts and countreys. For this was the fashion in his reign, to select yearly one or more of the most promising pregnancies out of both universities, and to breed them beyond the seas on the king's exhibitions unto them. Sir Thomas Smith, bred in Queen's-Colledge in Cambridge, and afterward principal secretary to queen Elizabeth, was one of the last educated in this manner. These young men proved afterwards the picklocks of the cabinet-counsels of foraigne princes, no king having better intelligence than king Henry from beyond the seas.

"11. Lastly, He justly paid a great yearly summe of money to many monks and nuns during their lives ; the manner and condition of which pensions we will now at large relate."—*Church. Hist., Hist. of Abbeyes*, book vi. p. 338.

was Cranmer, and, under such an instructor, it was not likely that he could remain long unacquainted with the great characteristic doctrines of the reformed religion. His intelligent mind readily and earnestly adopted those doctrines as his creed. The duke of Somerset, his uncle and protector, willingly acceded to the suggestions of Cranmer ; and, as several of the bishops were similarly disposed, the work of reformation was recommenced with many happy presages of success.

The first measure adopted was that of sending visitors to all parts of the kingdom, with authority to examine the state of the several parishes, their means of religious instruction, and the character of the pastors.* Nothing could be more deplorable than the spectacle which presented itself to these visitors. The ejected monks had been, of late, provided for by livings instead of pensions ; and as they were usually ignorant and superstitious men, a clergy, so formed, was little calculated to lessen the evils consequent on a long series of religious disorders. To preserve the people, therefore, as far as could be done by such means, from falling into total darkness, a book of homilies was composed ; and the curates were directed to instruct their congregation by regularly reading them in the church. To this excellent summary of Christian doctrine and precept, was added a translation of the “ Paraphrase of Erasmus on the New Testament ;” and thus the people, if anxious about divine knowledge, might readily obtain it.

But the injunctions given to the visitors did not every where exhibit so clear and comprehensive a knowledge of the spirit of the age. The article most objectionable to the Roman catholics was that which directed the immediate removal of images from the churches. The feeling inspired by this command was one of determined resistance ; and, though in matters of ceremony, the injunctions were as favourable to superstition, as in other parts they were applicable to the work of reform, this article respecting images threw a shadow over the whole.

* Records.

Gardiner and Bonner viewed the progress of the visitors with fear and anger. The very constitution of such a body was injurious to their interests and dignity ; and it was plainly their determination to resist it to the last. Gardiner, on being summoned before the privy council, spoke with bitterness against almost every principle stated in the injunctions. When further pressed to acknowledge the homilies, he again declared his resolution to continue to oppose their introduction into churches ; and, according to the evil spirit of the age, was immediately sent to prison. Gardiner was not the only person imprisoned : all who ventured openly to resist the injunctions, shared a similar treatment ; and the catholics had reason to apprehend that the heavens would soon wear as sad an aspect for them, as they did so short a time before for the protestants.

Another important step in the progress was taken shortly after the publication of the injunctions. This was the passing of a bill in parliament, authorising the administration of the communion in both kinds to the laity. The reasons for the passing of this act are succinctly stated in the act itself : — “ It being more agreeable,” says the preamble, “ to Christ’s first institution, and the practice of the church for 500 years after Christ, that the sacrament should be given in both the kinds of bread and wine, rather than in one kind only ; therefore it is enacted that it should be commonly given in both kinds, except necessity should otherwise require it. And it being also more agreeable to the first institution, and the primitive practice, that the people should receive with the priest, than that the priest should receive it alone, therefore, the day before every sacrament, an exhortation shall be made to the people to prepare themselves for it ; in which the benefits and danger of worthy and unworthy receiving are to be expressed, and the priests are not without a lawful cause to deny it to any.”

We begin with this enactment to catch the dim outline of some of the features of our church. This is still

more the case in the orders given to set aside most of the frivolous and burthensome customs which prevailed in the public service, and in the more positive command respecting the removal of the images, which still occupied their place in some of the churches. Soon after this, another charge was delivered to those who exercised the office of preachers ; and in every line of this document breathes the spirit of moderation and patience : “ Do not,” it says, “ encourage a precipitate zeal ; nor urge the people to go before those who are to instruct them ; but employ yourselves in persuading men to repent of their sins, and to dismiss all superstitious thoughts, contenting themselves with this, that what remains to be done will be effected in God’s own good time.” In support of which lesson, the people were reminded that, Christ and his Apostles did not oblige his followers to any sudden alteration of former customs, and that, therefore, we, who have no miraculous endowments, may be well content to pursue the cautious plan of reform here mentioned.

The advice thus given was not employed as an artifice to conceal an intention of proceeding no farther in the labour of correcting errors ; for before the close of the year (1548) a commission was appointed to examine the book of offices, with the view of adapting its language to the more intelligent opinion now taken of Christian worship and doctrine. The commission was of a dignity worthy the importance of the subject it had to examine. Sixteen bishops, the two archbishops, and six learned divines, formed the first meeting. Few of these distinguished men had advanced so far as Cranmer towards a spiritual view of the sacraments. When the nature of the eucharist was considered, so widely opposite were the opinions of the two parties, that it is more surprising they should have agreed upon any common view of the subject, than that they should not have approached nearer a perfect harmony of thought.

After a long debate, the commissioners decided that the eucharist should still be regarded as a mass, but

that it should be performed as a communion also. Exhortations, and a confession, were therefore drawn up ; and the whole service of the communion differed only in a slight degree from the beautiful and pathetic form which we employ at present. A proclamation announced the change thus effected ; and the bishops were instructed to give such directions to the curates of parishes as would ensure the performance of this solemn ordinance, according to the new service, the following Easter. The part of the alterations which created the strongest feeling of aversion, in the minds of the catholics, was the substitution of a general and public confession, for the private confession which it was formerly their custom to make to the priest before partaking of the communion. The introduction of this change broke the firmest hold that the Roman catholic clergy possessed over the consciences of the people. Had there been no private confessions, the church must long since have yielded to the free movements of the human mind, to the tendencies of that spirit of inquiry and resistance, which sprung up in Europe as early as the fourteenth century. It was not from any thing wrong in private confession itself that the Christian world had latterly so much reason to wish it abolished. Cases may be supposed in which the system, properly regulated, would afford the most powerful aid to wounded consciences, the surest support to the weak, the best opportunities for admonishing the proud heart, and snatching it from the toils of Satan. But how singularly chastened, by the most spiritual discipline, how pure in character, how elevated in mind, ought ecclesiastics to be, if charged with administering a system like this ; and how certain it is that, failing in these qualities, the possession of a right to contemplate every weakness of the human heart must lead to abuses of the most dangerous kind. An open confession of sins, on the other hand, though less humiliating to proud and thoughtless hearts, will as strongly impress the mind of a true penitent with sorrow for sin, with disgust at the recollection of his follies and his weaknesses, as the

private declaration of his guilt. It will have the advantage, moreover, of bringing him closer to God, by freeing him from the fears, the confusion and embarrassments which must more or less affect his mind when alone with one of his fellow creatures. In the former case, he speaks immediately to his Heavenly Father ; if he feels abashed, he has not deceived himself by a false notion of his humiliation : it is the sense of his guilt, and of God's presence, which alone can have produced the sorrowful emotion in his soul.

Nor ought it to be supposed that a general and declarative absolution is of less value to the penitent than that which is addressed to him in particular. The efficacy of the ordinance must in both cases depend on the faith and sorrow which have prompted the confession. Where these assist, the conditions on which God promises to have mercy are fulfilled. His minister, the ambassador of Christ, declaring the conditions of pardon, and receiving in return an assurance that faith and repentance have brought the assembled sinners to his ministrations of mercy ; that they acknowledge their guilt, have no wish to conceal their lost condition, but look and sigh for pity at the throne of the Saviour ; receiving this assurance, in answer to his exhortation, he pronounces the sentence of acquittal, and sends back the humbled, but comforted penitent, to manifest his thankfulness for this gracious pardon of his offences. What can be more complete ? What can answer more closely to the sacramental promises of baptism ; or lead the heart with truer confidence to feed on the body and blood of Christ ?

The reformation of a church can avail little, if the most active measures are not pursued for opening the eyes of the people to the principles on which it has proceeded, and the present and future advantages which they may expect to derive from co-operating spiritually in the work. Luther had ever sought to secure the advantages which he gained over the enemy, by enabling his countrymen to judge for themselves whether

he was right or wrong. True protestants will, in every country, follow his example. Cranmer, having effected the above changes, now turned his thoughts to the compilation of a catechism, on the basis of one already existing in Latin, and which was to serve as a general introduction to the knowledge of Christian doctrine. In this elementary treatise he brought forward plain and scriptural proofs of the errors of the Roman church, insisting strongly on the idolatrous nature of the honour paid to images, and on the duty of destroying them. But many points of the catechism illustrate in a striking manner the difficulties which still opposed the reception of the simple doctrine of revelation. The real presence is alluded to, and absolution is spoken of as a sacrament; these remains of ancient error clearly indicating that neither Cranmer nor his party had, as yet, become sufficiently free from the impressions of early education, and the mighty influence of expressions, long recognised as divine, to take the word of God as the sole standard of truth. But the mists soon passed away; and such was the happy zeal of the reformers at this period, that the homilies and catechism having been prepared, they proceeded without delay to examine what materials existed for a liturgy, which might be made applicable to all the wants of a general congregation.

Almost every bishop in the early ages of the church exercised the right of employing what form of prayer he considered best fitted to the wants and capacities of his people.* As this liberty was found to be prejudicial

* "In after ages, bishops agreed by consent to conform their liturgy to the model of the metropolitan church of the province to which they belonged. And then it was enacted into a law by several councils, that the same order and uniformity should be observed in all churches. The rudiments of this discipline were first laid in the French churches; for in the council of Agde a canon was made, about the year 506, that one and the same order should be equally observed in all churches of the province, in all parts of divine service. And, in the council of Epone, it is more expressly said that, in celebrating divine offices, the provincial bishop should observe the same order as was observed by the metropolitan. And before these, the council of Vannes, in Bretany in the province of Tours, made a like order for that whole province, that one and the same custom in celebrating divine service, and the same order for psalmody, should be kept in all churches; that, as they held one faith and confession of the Holy Trinity, so they should keep to one rule of divine offices; lest, if

to the interests of the church at large, several councils undertook to restrict the multiplication of liturgies, and, as far as could be effected, to reduce the most popular to a common form. But so late even as the era of the reformation different offices of devotion were used in the various provinces of England, each owing its sanctity to the venerable name of its supposed author, and each wanting the chief characteristics of a form of prayer through which men seek to make their requests known unto God.

The first step taken by Cranmer and his associates, in their new design, was to collect these various service-books, and examine them with the care of men whose object was not to change or obliterate for the sake of novelty, but to promote the work of edification. It was with no fierce or polemical feeling, therefore, that they began the perusal of the books before them; and the reward of their meekness was ample and glorious. They were enabled to see the worth of that which was intrinsically good, and to transplant it, free from any mixture of error, into their own formulary. By this careful and pious employment of whatever had been consecrated as well by piety as antiquity, and was not less

they varied in their observations, that variation should be interpreted as a disagreement in some point or other. And the same rule was made and concerted in the Spanish churches. For in the council of Girone, an. 517, a like decree was made for the whole province of Tarragone or Catalonia, that the same order of mass and custom in psalmody, and other ministrations, should be observed in all churches of the province, as was observed in the metropolitical church. The fourth council of Toledo enlarged the order for uniformity in all the churches of Spain and Gallicia, obliging all priests to perform divine offices in the same manner, that there might be no diversity among them, and that such difference might neither offend the weak, nor look like a schism in the church to ignorant and carnal men. Therefore they appointed, that one order should be observed in praying and singing, and the same method be kept in the morning and evening service, because they were all of the same faith and the same kingdom. And the first council of Braga has four or five canons to the same purpose, appointing the same order of psalmody, and lessons, and salutations, and the same forms of celebrating baptism and the eucharist, to be observed in all churches. So that, though every bishop at first had liberty to frame a liturgy for the use of his own church, yet in process of time they agreed by consent to take the liturgy of the metropolitical church as a standard for the whole province; and when the Roman empire began to be cantonized and divided into different kingdoms, then came in the use of national liturgies, whose use was commensurate to the bounds and limits of their respective nations and kingdoms." — *Eccles. Antiq.* book xiii. c. v. sec 2.

calculated to express the necessities of the soul than it was to soften the heart by its beauty and pathos of language, the commissioners found themselves in possession of materials admirably adapted, in every way, to their purpose.

No time was lost in the performance of this sacred labour; and, at its conclusion, the people of England received from the venerable fathers of our church the noblest gift, after the translation of the Bible, they ever received from man. In this first edition of the common prayer, the morning and evening services were the same as at present, with one important exception, the absence of any form of confession and absolution. The communion service wanted the ten commandments, and in the use of the elements, the wine was to be mixed with water; and the bread to consist of round unleavened patches, distinguished from the wafers, formerly employed, by being thicker, and without any stamp or impression on them. Some slight difference also existed in the prayer for Christ's church; the Virgin Mary, the apostles, saints, and martyrs being alluded to, by name, in the passages where God is praised, "for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear." And in the prayer of consecration occurred the words, "With thy Holy Spirit vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved son."

The form of baptism was, in great part, the same as it now stands in our prayer books. But several of the superstitious niceties were retained which deprived the sacrament of so much of the sublime simplicity with which it was endowed by the Redeemer himself. Thus, a cross having been made on the child's breast as well as his forehead, the devil was adjured to depart, and the priest, taking the infant by his right hand, placed him in the font three times, once on each side and once on the breast. He was then clothed in a pure white garment, betokening his newly acquired innocence, and,

having been anointed on the head, was blessed in a concluding prayer for the Holy Ghost. In the visitation of the sick, the anointing with oil was retained, and, in the funeral service, the custom of praying for the dead. These were the points in which consisted the difference between the first impression of the plan of worship in the national church, and that given to the church when its doctrines and discipline were finally settled. The catechism which still affords so admirable an introduction to the knowledge of the Christian system, formed a part of the prayer book; the only passage which it needed was the definition of the sacraments, on which the views of the reformers were not yet sufficiently settled to enable them to speak with clearness and decision.

But temperate as were Cranmer and his associates in this work of reform, they had to encounter a reckless and determined opposition. Gardiner had been liberated from confinement, on promising to give his assent to the measures which he had treated with so little regard to the wishes of the government; but, instead of fulfilling his promise, he persevered in a course of conduct which proved that he would leave nothing unattempted to prevent the settlement of the church on the basis of reformed doctrine. Such was his enmity to the improvements effected in the ordinances of religion, and to those who introduced them, that he would mount the pulpit whenever a reformer was about to preach, and, notwithstanding the promises he had made, exhort the people to close their ears against the teachers thus sent to instruct them. So resolved does he appear to have been to carry the affair to extremities, that he is said to have armed the servants of his house as if to defend himself by force; and on being allowed, at his express desire, to preach before the king, his sermon abounded in matter of so violent and almost seditious a nature, that the council considered itself justified in committing him to the Tower.

- In so far as the bishop did break a solemn promise

of conformity, or act or speak seditiously, he merited the severity exercised against him ; but, if he did nothing more than use his best endeavours to prevent the establishing of a faith which he thought erroneous, and as a bishop, avail himself of his privileges to warn the people against the supposed errors, we know no argument whereby the conduct of those who sent him to prison could be justified, unless it be this, that, in those times, the principles of justice and freedom were as little understood or regarded as the vital doctrines of Christianity.

But Gardiner was not the worst enemy to the protestant cause. The multitude of ignorant priests, who could not be made to understand the value of a change which should make the people wiser than themselves, employed the vilest arts to destroy the influence which the newly circulated homilies, and other publications of the reformers, were calculated to obtain. Of the clergy who were somewhat above these in rank and learning, many retained all the feelings of indignation which had sprung up in their minds when Henry VIII. began the dissolution of the monasteries. Some there were, also, which belonged to the party of which More and Fisher had been the defenders, even unto blood, and who now saw, with mingled rage and despair, the restoration of the papal authority in the country become less and less possible.*

The union of these opponents deprived the reformers, for a time, of that full harvest of converts, of those happy and inspiring triumphs over the darkness that lingered round the borders of the land, which might have been looked for at this period. But we know not the ways of Providence in such seasons of mighty changes,—in the hour when churches and nations are undergoing the throes of a second birth. Had the church of Eng-

* Fuller says, that a proclamation was issued about this time prohibiting any one from preaching, the disputes between the clergy of the opposite parties rising to so dangerous a height. Burnet doubts the genuineness of the document quoted by Fuller.—Church Hist. Hist. of Reformation, vol. ii. p. 129.

land been sooner built, it would, probably, not have been built so well: had the means and opportunities of raising the superstructure been more at command, the builders would not have spent so much time about the foundations.

Shortly before the conclusion of the year 1548, an important one in the history of the reformation, an act was passed setting aside the laws which had prohibited the marriage of the clergy; and another, confirming the book of common prayer as the rule of the church service. The former of these acts gave rise to disputes which the friends of religion would gladly have prevented at such a time. But the subject was one of vast consequence to the plans of reformation. The celibacy of the Romish clergy had been very generally considered as a fruitful source of the vices laid to their charge. Religion and morality, therefore, demanded an inquiry into the reasons on which it had been established. But this was not the only view taken of the subject. The separation of the clergy from the mass of the community was secured by their celibacy; and the policy of Rome had, it was well known, sought by this method to render every class of its ministers, more completely devoted to its will. Nor was it likely, so long as this rule continued, that the phalanx of its defenders would be easily broken up. The peculiarity of their mode of life, their comparative independence, their freedom to plan and act, unconfined by ordinary sympathies, unburthened by ordinary cares, opened their ears to the slightest whisper from the ruler of the church. This was generally known and felt; and it is not improbable that the more politic of the reformers might regard the breaking down of this strong fence to the Roman citadel as an object particularly worthy of their thoughts.

The homilies, the catechism, and the book of common prayer, were now fairly before the world. Each of these works had been compiled with a care worthy of the important topics of which it treated. The age was too strongly excited to permit of men's writing or

speaking on serious matters without serious thoughts. It was an age of earnest feeling, of bold experiment, of risk and hope. The leaders in the grand movement of mind and spirit had to steer through the midst of the torrent; but they confessed the power of divine grace as mightier than the mightiest influences that pressed upon them from without. Men of another class and character could not have prevented the world from interfering with what they taught; but how few and slight are the passages in the writings put forth by the fathers of our church that betray any temporising or unspiritual feeling.

Thankful, however, as the nation had a right to be for the benefits thus conferred, it is difficult to read, without a feeling of the most painful kind, the ordinance of government which commanded universal assent to the form of worship established by the new liturgy. "The parliament," it is said, "having considered the book, and the things that were altered and retained in it, they gave their most humble thanks to the king for his care about it; and did pray, that all who had formerly offended in in these matters, except such as were in the Tower of London, or the prison of the Fleet, should be pardoned; and did enact, that, from the feast of Whit-Sunday next all divine offices should be performed according to it; and that such of the clergy as should refuse to do it, or continue to officiate in any other manner, should, upon the first conviction, be imprisoned six months, and forfeit a year's profit of their benefice; for the second offence, forfeit all their church preferments, and suffer a year's imprisonment: and for the third offence, should be imprisoned during life. And all that should write, or put out things in print against it, or threaten any clergyman for using it, were to be fined in 10*l.* for the first offence, 20*l.* for the second, and to forfeit all their goods, and, upon a third offence, be imprisoned for life."*

How clearly do we learn from enactments like this, that charity, or the blessed light which she bestows, is not

* Burnet, vol. ii. p. 148.

a necessary attendant on the improvement of institutions, but that she must be sought for in long-continued application to the principles of heavenly wisdom. The authority claimed by popish princes in the name of the church of Rome, and all the offences committed thereby against freedom of conscience, could scarcely have effected greater injury to the cause of truth than the command set forth in the preamble to the above act. Rome asserted the infallibility of its decrees, prohibited the questioning of doctrines and maxims to which it had set its seal, and enacted the heaviest penalties wherever its injunctions were disobeyed. The English parliament did the same when it forbade the appearance of any writing in which the principles of the late reform might be disputed. Had it been contented with issuing a decree which would have obliged the clergy to observe uniformity of discipline and worship, or to resign their benefices, its proceedings might have been defended on the plea, that such a course was necessary in order to preserve the nation from the never-ceasing agitations of pulpit controversies, and to secure that uniformity of worship and discipline in the established church, without which it could never enjoy the influence essential to its future authority. But when the incumbent had been made to give up his benefice, to cease from appearing at the altar of a church which he hated, it was surely an instance of the grossest tyranny to pursue him with bonds and imprisonment. Although, again, it might be proper to silence the abuse of the church in its own pulpits, it could only manifest the most suspicious and haughty temper, on the part of the government, to stop, on a sudden, the course of inquiry so natural to such a period, or to punish the expression of feelings which many of the catholics must have honestly and bitterly cherished in common with other defeated controversialists. They had been overcome, it was said, by a righteous appeal to truth, and the fair use of argument. Was it now to be said, enough has been gained or done by controversy, and, protestantism triumphant, it shall lay

aside its former weapons of defence and all its spiritual armour, content to be safe by the employment of the same means as were originally resorted to by Rome?

This was an error much to be deplored. A true protestant, a faithful and loving child of the church of England, deeply laments every circumstance which is at variance with the grand principle on which the church is essentially established; but he has this to console him,—the protestant church has had the corrective in itself. While Rome continued from age to age to pursue its course of tyrannous persecution; while it could justify this its course by arguments drawn from the dogmas of its creed; while, in searching its traditions and its fathers, it could find nothing that might check its darkest purposes of inquisitorial rage;—the protestant church had scarcely done aught to violate the maxims of evangelical charity, when it found itself drawn in by the strong curb of its own openly asserted principles, and obliged, at every subsequent period, when it committed a similar error, to acknowledge by its practical retraction, that it had violated its own life-giving and primal law.

The next great effort of Cranmer and his colleagues was to arrange the confession of the English church. It had been the aim of the German reformers, at the diet of Augsburg, to settle the foundation of protestantism by an appeal to Scripture, and by placing in a clear and distinct form the results of their careful comparison of precept with precept, and doctrine with doctrine. They felt that this was the only legitimate method of answering their opponents, and of securing concord among themselves. The English reformers were at present triumphant. It was for them to furnish the outline of the national religion: and, in calling upon the clergy and people to conform themselves to the rules of worship and discipline which they had laid down, it was but their duty to unfold, with all befitting distinctness, the doctrines to which, on the authority of Scripture, they required assent. Bucer, it is said, had pressed this matter on the

attention of Cranmer, at an early period of the reformation, but cautious in all his proceedings, the latter refused to adopt any measure of so important a kind till he saw such a conformity of opinion among the heads of the clergy as would prevent the danger of dissension. On the consecration of Miles Coverdale and Hooper to the sees of Exeter and Gloucester, the bench of bishops was occupied by a large majority of reformers. Gardiner having been obliged to vacate his diocese, Bonner soon shared his fate, and his place was now occupied by the learned and pious Ridley. This change afforded new strength to the protestant party, as a party, but had been effected by such an unjust exercise of authority against the deposed prelates, that, as in the case of the law against questioning the perfection of the liturgy, every candid mind shrinks from the task of defending or excusing it. Affairs, however, were at present in a state which promised the continuance of tranquillity, and the opportunity was gladly embraced for discussing the articles of faith. It is conjectured that Cranmer and Ridley had the principal share in drawing up the outline of the English confession, and that their statement of doctrine was subsequently laid before each of the other prelates for their correction or approval.* The articles thus drawn up were forty-two in number, and having been received and acknowledged in the convocation held at London in February, 1552, they were published by the "king's authority, as agreed upon by the bishops, and other learned and good men, to root out the discord of opinions, and establish the agreement of true religion." †

Of the several struggles which continued to agitate the country, we cannot here speak. Nor is it within the compass of our present design to describe the awful retribution which fell upon the protestants in the reign

* These articles, wholly set aside by queen Mary, were reduced to thirty-nine when brought in again by queen Elizabeth. Some attempt was made by the puritans to introduce alterations favouring their particular views; but their conferences led to very trifling changes.

† Burnet, vol. ii p. 265.

of Mary, or the recovery and final establishment of their power in that of Elizabeth. The church of the reformation was now planted so as never to be uprooted, however much its outworks might be assailed, however furiously its enemies might rage within, and pollute, the courts of its temple. In events subsequent to the period of which we have spoken, the character of the national reformation became more fully developed, gathered fresh strength at one time from opposition, at another, from readily harmonising circumstances ; but no new principle was appealed to, and none was required, for settling the polity or defining the doctrine of the church. Mary employed a violence so precipitate, so fierce, that no persecutor, of ancient or modern times, has more truly deserved the obloquy which attends a dark and sanguinary bigotry than this cruel but unfortunate queen. Under the guidance of the new pope *, Julius III., and with Gardiner for her councillor, the project of restoring all things to their former state was as rapidly executed as it was boldly conceived. Mary had at first declared that she would not interfere with the religious freedom of her people ; but scarcely had this declaration been made when the rites of the Roman catholic worship were restored, and Cranmer and Latimer sent to the Tower for refusing to recognise the lawfulness of the change. The rest of the protestant bishops were immediately after deprived of their seats in the house of lords. This was followed by the repeal of the acts passed in the preceding reigns against the power of the pope, or the institutions of the Roman church. But the protestants were too strong to be overcome by a single blow. The fury of the persecution dare not vent itself at once ; and it was not till the year 1555 that Gardiner succeeded in persuading the queen to send forth the ministers of papal wrath to prepare their judgment seats and their faggots. Then flowed the blood of martyrs who, by their patient and willing sufferings, nourished the spirit of the reformation with its best food, strengthening it against the

* Paul III. died in 1549.

trials of prosperity, and expelling the bad humours which its hitherto comparatively easy triumph had allowed it to retain. Hooper was among the first who perished in the flames. After a short but melancholy interval, Ridley and Latimer followed on the same path of suffering and glory. Then came Cranmer, the gentleness of his soul, the natural calm of his heart and mind unfitting him, as far as nature was concerned, for mighty efforts and trials, or for the supporting of sufferings to which he had not familiarised himself by deep and continued meditation. But he shrunk from the appalling spectacle of torture and an agonising death, only to gain fortitude from the sorrowful conviction of his weakness. The seeds of strength are ever sown with those of faith and love. Cranmer retracted, and delivered his retraction in words written with ink: he abjured this act of weakness, and confirmed his abjuration with tears of the saddest penitence, and a death as demonstrative of faith, and as exemplary for its firmness, as that of the most celebrated of the primitive confessors.

The see of Canterbury, as soon as rendered vacant by the deposition of Cranmer, was given to cardinal Pole; and the continuance of the persecution, while it brought so many virtuous and holy men to the stake, deprived the country, by the flight of others, of the good to be expected from their learning, their wisdom, and their noble examples. But amidst all this distress, the protestants remained unsubdued. Driven from the churches, forbidden to raise their hands in prayer, or partake of the Lord's Supper, according to the rule of the gospel, they sought the most obscure retreats for the exercise of their religion, and, hidden from the eye of the world, appealed to the Lord for help in this season of their Zion's calamity. The new archbishop of Canterbury was a man of great accomplishments, and less inclined to extreme measures than it might have been supposed would be the case with one so long familiar with Roman despotism; but whatever might be his individual feelings, they were overruled by the violence of Mary, and

her advisers. Every year seemed to add to the strength of her fierce and melancholy zeal, till, in 1558, such was the horrible blindness of her heart, that she issued an ordinance forbidding men even to pray for those condemned to the flames, or to say even "God help them."

Mary lived but six months after this; and her death, which happened on the 17th of November, was succeeded, in a few hours, by that of cardinal Pole. The accession of Elizabeth speedily dispersed the gloom which hung over the protestant church. Once more was the Bible brought forth: the sound of the gospel began to be heard again in every corner of the land. Men the most renowned in the nation for wisdom and piety were called to the councils of the queen; and, under their auspices, the church of England, by God's continual blessing, became, from day to day, better fitted to minister grace and knowledge to the people. The narrative of events subsequent to this period belongs properly to the separate history of the English church. We have brought it to the point when Rome had so far lost its ascendancy, and her corruptions of doctrine and worship were sufficiently eradicated, to render the further reformation of the church the duty of the church itself, rather than a struggle for reformation against a hostile power.

CHAP. XIX.

REFORMATION IN FRANCE. — PERSECUTIONS. — LEADERS OF THE
 PROTESTANTS. — DEATH OF HENRY II. — CONSPIRACY OF
 AMBROSE. — CONSEQUENCES OF IT. — ST. BARTHOLOMEW. —
 SUBSEQUENT FATE OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

WHILE such was the course of things in England, France was preparing for a succession of troubles not less terrible, but far less fruitful in great or beneficial results. The death of Francis I. took place within a few months of that of Henry VIII., and he left his kingdom in a state which demanded the most prudent counsels, and the most energetic exercise of paternal sovereignty. He had himself understood but little of the principles whereby nations are made happy, and thrones established on the love and concord of mankind. Generous, bold, and not wanting in a certain species of religious feeling, had he lived in an earlier age, he might have greatly increased both the power and glory of his country : but ignorant at once of his duty and his interest at the period in which he lived, unable to stem the torrent which swelled around him, he committed a series of mistakes in his policy, the avoiding of which might have saved France from sorrows the effects of which are not yet altogether vanished.

The persecution of the protestants, carried on at intervals by the late king, was now to become the leading principle of the French government. At the instigation of the cardinal of Lorraine efforts were made to establish the inquisition in Paris with the same powers as it possessed in Spain. The firm resistance of the parliament alone saved the nation from this terrible intruder on the small remains of its freedom. Awe-

struck, as it seemed, by the recollection of the number who had already perished on the scaffold, or in the flames, the magistrates began to relax in their zeal almost in the same proportion as the more bigoted of the king's counsellors grew fierce in their wishes. This unallowed tolerance on the part of the magistrates, uniting with the increasing popularity of the reformed doctrines, tended to increase daily the followers of Luther, Zuingle, or Calvin. In 1555 a regular congregation was established in Paris, and, though it dare not assemble in any open or fixed place of worship, the members were sufficiently confident of increasing safety to meet first in one house, and then in another, for the known purpose of religious communion.

But the security in which they trusted was based on sandy foundations. They were deceived by appearances to which they ought never to have given heed, when the safety of their rising church was still in danger. Instead, however, of waiting patiently the proper season for showing their force, they assembled to the amount of 400, and made a display of success which could not but awaken the attention of the more jealous of the catholic party. The building where they met was in the quarter of St. Jacques, and the night was already far advanced when, having completed their devotions, they were preparing to retire. On a sudden, they discovered that the neighbouring streets and lanes were filled with a dense mass of people, breathing menaces of destruction. The darkness of the night alone offered any hope of safety. They opened the doors of their retreat, and began to go forth ; but what was their horror when they saw that every house in the neighbourhood had a torch burning at its windows, and that their persons might be as easily recognised as if it had been broad noon. Some of the gentlemen present, finding the multitude intent on murder, resolved to defend themselves to the last, and, drawing their swords, succeeded in forcing their way through the crowd. But more than half the number consisted of women or aged per-

sons. These were seized by the infuriated people, and only escaped from their cruelties to be taken by a body of the king's guards, and hurried off to prison.

The consternation of the reformers was indescribable at this unlooked-for outbreaking of popular fury, supported, as it seemed, by the secret connivance and assistance of the government. Among the prisoners were persons of the highest respectability, attendants even on the court, officers of the army, and others known for their fortune or influence in society. Terrified at the contemplation of proceeding against so numerous a body, the parliament manifested no inclination to pursue the opportunity of triumph which seemed thus put in its power. The cardinal of Lorraine viewed the affair with very different feelings. To him it presented itself as affording a favourable moment for crushing the reformers by one grand and signal exercise of power. His advice, it is probable, would have been followed; but at this period the king was in close alliance with the Swiss and German reformers, and, at their earnest request, he found himself obliged to direct that the prisoners might be set free.

But if the cardinal of Lorraine was defeated in his attempt to ruin the protestants by this sudden movement, he obtained ample satisfaction for the disappointment in the success of his measures for the establishment of the inquisition. It was at the moment when France rung, from one end to the other, with songs of triumph, that he carried this design into execution. Calais had just fallen into the hands of the king, and the protestants, though still trembling under the expected grasp of their enemies, did not refuse to join in these expressions of national joy. The cardinal was of too gloomy a mind to be moved from his purpose at the spectacle of peace and festivity which the country presented; but, choosing rather to work on the pride of the king, than to leave him to any generous influence, he procured a decree which bestowed upon himself, the

cardinal de Bourbon, and the cardinal de Chatillon, the office and power of grand inquisitors for France. By this edict they were authorised to arrest, imprison, and consign to death all persons, whatever might be their rank or degree, on whom they could fix the charge of heresy.

The opposition of the parliament, and the prevailing temper of a considerable portion of the respectable classes, greatly modified the power of this terrific tribunal. It was even suspected that several of the most influential members of the parliament were favourable to the views of the reformers, and that in resisting the edicts issued from the bed of justice they were providing for their own safety as well as for that of the persecuted calvinists. The cardinal of Lorraine insisted on the necessity of betraying these suspected members of the chambers into some open acknowledgment of their opinions. Yielding to the base suggestions of his adviser, Henry, on the 15th of June, 1559, held a bed of justice; and surrounded by all the great officers of state, by the cardinals Lorraine and Bourbon, the constable, the duke of Guise, and other noblemen, he stated his desire to settle the present religious disputes according to the law of charity and holiness.

Among the suspected persons were the presidents Harlai, Seguier, and the learned and virtuous de Thou. Their answers to the suspicions of the monarch were firm and prudent. They warned him of the danger which ever attended persecution, as well to those who inflicted the misery as to those who endured it. Milder measures, they added, would be far more likely to effect the desired object, if the discouragement of heresy was the aim of the court. Twenty-five years of sad experience demonstrated the truth of their opinion on this matter, and the independence of the Gallican church, as well as the peace of the country, seemed greatly to depend, as they proved, on the adoption of tolerant and tranquillising principles.

The addresses of these admirable men were followed by those of other councillors, less moderate, less wise, but deserving honour for the manner in which, despising thoughts of personal danger, they ventured to declare their abhorrence of the meditated treason against religion and justice. Their bitter expostulations were listened to with ill-concealed indignation by the king and his advisers. Nor did the heroism they displayed awaken any sympathy in the minds of men long trained to servility, and ignorant of any better motive to action than a blind dependence on the dictates of their zeal. "Hasten to subdue the rebellious spirit of heresy by redoubled vigour," was the exclamation of many of the magistrates, "and remember the example of Philip Augustus, who did not fear to put 600 heretics to death in one day." * Henry was prepared to follow the advice thus given him, and before he left the court directed the captain of his guard to arrest the most obnoxious of those who had ventured to take so bold a course in the debate. The protestants saw the gathering of the storm that was about to burst upon their heads; but a few days only had passed, when, by a singular dispensation of Providence, Henry perished in the midst of triumph and festivity. In the tourney held to grace the nuptials of his son with Mary of Scotland, he displayed a bravery and a skill which had won him the applauses of the most splendid assembly that France could present. Still thirsting for honour in the mimic battle, he obliged the captain of his guards to try with him the only two lances which remained unbroken. The force and steadiness of the encounter promised fresh triumphs to the monarch; but, the fastenings of his vizir becoming loose, the lance of Montgomeri struck him near the left eye. He was taken up insensible; and, an abscess having formed, which defied the imperfect skill of his physicians, his death followed on the 29th of July.

Francis II. was only sixteen years of age when he

* Thuani Hist., t. i. p. 621. Lacretelle, Hist. de France, t. i. p. 305.

began to reign, and the weakness of his frame, his want of mental cultivation, and general disinclination for business, contributed to throw all the power, as well as the responsibility, of government into the hands of his ambitious relatives. But incapacity for better things does not prevent a prince from becoming a zealot and a persecutor. Francis comprehended the maxims of the cardinal Lorraine with precocious ingenuity ; and, had he lived long enough, would probably have become, in every way, the worthy ally of Philip of Spain, and Mary of England.

Protestantism, notwithstanding the power of its enemies, was daily gathering strength. It could now number among its supporters some of the finest characters in France. At the head of these stood the admiral Coligni and his high-spirited brother, Dandelot. Both had distinguished themselves by a noble devotion to the cause of their country ; by their incomparable valour and their invincible fortitude. Coligni imbibed the truths of evangelical religion in the prison to which he was led after the battle of St. Quentin. Dandelot venerated the wisdom of his brother, and gladly followed him on the path which he had chosen. But the greater ardour of his temper speedily exposed him to the observation of the court. He was apprehended, cast into prison, and only escaped a worse punishment by the apprehensions which were entertained of the power of his family. One of the grand inquisitors, the cardinal Chatillon, was his brother, and, though an inquisitor, was secretly inclined to the same views of religion. Dandelot suffered but a short confinement ; and, having consented to hear mass performed in the prison, was restored to his liberty and honours.

While there was the energy of a sincere faith in such men as these, there were not wanting others who regarded protestantism as a species of rampart, a breast-work, already raised sufficiently high to afford them the shelter which they needed in defending their own dig-

nity and rights. The king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé, it is conjectured, would not have so soon engaged themselves in the religious quarrel, or pursued it at least with such a determined spirit, had they not seen cause to resent the conduct of the court.* Thus each class of the new professors had its leaders. The more spiritual rejoiced in the fervour of such men as the Chatillons: those of a more worldly character gladly prepared to range themselves under the banners of the prince of Condé.

The course of political events soon brought the two parties into a position whence it was impossible that either could retreat without compromising their consistency or their honour. At the close of the year 1559, Anne Dubourg, one of the counsellors who had spoken so openly before Henry II. at the bed of justice, fell a victim to his honourable zeal.† The execution of this firm and pious professor of the reformed doctrines seemed to increase the ardour of the cardinal Lorraine; and he now began to bring into more active operation all the terrors of the tribunal known by the name of the “*Chambre Ardente*.” Carrying on its designs by the help of a class of men who took delight in the very exercise of cruelty, and who frequently saw themselves enriched by the spoils of their victims, nothing could exceed the violations of justice perpetrated daily under the name of religion. The houses of persons suspected of protestantism were assailed day and night by spies; and, in one instance, a fierce conflict ensued, which almost led to the mingling of blood with the bread and wine of the communion.

Meetings held for no other than a religious purpose were soon succeeded by assemblies far more dangerous to the government. Goaded on by fresh demonstrations of injustice, and by the daily apprehension of some attack which might prove fatal to their cause, Coligni, the prince of Condé, and their associates began to form

* Lacretelle, t. i. liv. iv. p. 326.

† Thuanus, p. 639

serious designs of preparing a regular plan of defence. The conspiracy of Amboise was the result of numerous meetings held in Vendôme. Jean de Bari, a man of ardent spirit, deeply imbued with veneration for the doctrines of Calvin, and rendered sedate by a long and unjust exile, became the willing agent of the design. With a zeal and activity alike indifferent to fatigue, he traversed every province of the country, diffusing the seeds of conspiracy, and rousing the yet dormant party to an active assertion of its rights. "It is not enough," said he, "to be willing to suffer. The time is come to make your enemies tremble, and oblige them to cease from their insufferable cruelties."

The city of Nantes saw the conspirators assembled for their first great movement. Jean de Bari employed all the force of his eloquence to convince them, that his main object was to deliver the young monarch from the power of his evil counsellors; and that he had no other feelings than those of loyalty and affection for his sovereign and the state. In conformity with this declaration, he advised an immediate attack on the town of Blois, the present residence of the king, who, being safely in their hands, might then be persuaded to alter his mode of government, and confer upon his subjects the inestimable blessing of religious liberty.

An advocate named Avenelle, who had involved himself deeply in the plot, found his courage yielding at the moment when every thing was prepared for the execution of the design. He hastened to the cardinal of Lorraine, related all that had happened and was about to be attempted. Terrified at the discovery, the grand inquisitor immediately communicated the alarming tidings to the court. Francis II. had sense and feeling enough to discover the extent of his danger, and its true source. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "what have I done that my people should rise against me? I will hear their complaints. They shall have their rights." Then, turning to the cardinal of Lorraine, he said, with a force and bitterness of expression hitherto

unknown to him, "It is you, you alone, who render me odious to my subjects."*

The duke of Guise, proud, ambitious, and intolerant as his brother the cardinal, was infinitely superior to him in force of character and fitness for any season of danger. It had been the advice of the queen-mother that Coligni, and the other chiefs of the protestant party, should be pacified by timely concessions to their wishes; and that the admiral himself should be straightway admitted into the councils of the court. The duke of Guise listened to the queen with attention; and, in one sense, agreeing with her, immediately advised that Coligni, Dandelot, and the prince of Condé might be sent for to court, that they might be treated on their arrival with an outward show of respect, but be detained, in reality, as hostages for the future conduct of their party.

Coligni and the prince of Condé were, according to this advice, sent for to the castle of Amboise, whither the court removed without at present declaring its discovery of the plot against the liberty of the king. As no reason could be alleged for refusing the invitation, both the admiral and the prince attended the bidding of their sovereign. Fairly assured of their separation from the main body of their colleagues, the duke of Guise would gladly have given way, at once, to the joy which he felt at his secret triumph over the heads of the now dreaded, rather than despised, protestants. But while the champion of the royal cause was engaged with Coligni and the prince, in a pretended conference on their respective affairs, Jean de Bari still pressed forward with his little army. "We are suspected," he said, "but not discovered;" and, directing his steps towards the castle of Amboise, he cherished the hope of succeeding in the meditated attack before measures could be taken by the royalists for their defence. Treachery, however, again interfered to preserve the king. The duke of Guise was informed of the inten-

* Lacreteille, t. i. liv. iv. p. 353.

tions and exact situation of the insurgents. A body of troops received instant orders to march against them ; and a short but bloody battle left the plain covered with the bodies of the conspirators. Of the two chiefs in command of the band, Jean de Bari fell on the field ; the other, Castelnau, had remained in his chateau ; but, having been persuaded to come forth and surrender himself, he was taken to Amboise, thrown into a dungeon, and soon after condemned to death. Several others, who had been made prisoners at the same time, shared his fate. The last of these victims to the attempt of Bari, as he prepared himself for the executioner, dipped his hands in the blood that was streaming over the scaffold, and then, raising them to heaven, exclaimed, " O God, avenge, I beseech thee, the blood of these martyrs." But how small was the number of those who thus fell by the sword of justice, compared with the multitude of victims who, involved directly or indirectly in the affair, were given up to indiscriminating slaughter ! more than twelve hundred persons, it is said, perished in Amboise. The duke of Guise was glutted with revenge ; but his minions had not yet satisfied their thirst for the blood of Hugonots ; and, when other methods of slaughter failed, they hung whoever attracted their suspicion on the trees in the neighbouring forest.*

The prince of Condé, and his distinguished associates, escaped with difficulty the peril which hung over them. Their rank, and the esteem which they enjoyed with the nation at large, rendered a present attempt upon their lives too dangerous an enterprise even for the duke of Guise. But it required little sagacity to discover that their security, in future, must depend, not on the mere influence of their rank or name, but on the number of their followers, and the power of their swords. This once acknowledged, the prospect of a civil war became every day more certain. France beheld itself about to be plunged into calamities such as,

- * Thuanus, t. i. p. 674. Lacretelle.

happily, few nations have suffered ; and from which she has never thoroughly recovered.

On the death of the chancellor Olivier, the celebrated Michel de l'Hôpital was elevated to the vacant dignity. Justice and toleration had a friend in this great man, which seemed to promise them at least a temporary triumph over their enemies. The conspiracy of Amboise furnished the cardinal of Lorraine with arguments which taught the king to believe, that not even the inquisition itself was sufficient to prevent the growth of the evils attendant upon heresy. New measures were proposed ; and every honest mind trembled at the prospect of a period when the souls of men would lie utterly prostrate beneath the grasp of tyrannous laws. L'Hôpital succeeded in greatly modifying the meditated proclamations. In the edict of Romorantin, drawn up under his own eye, the secret meetings of the protestants were forbidden under pain of death : but he foresaw that the parliament of Paris would refuse to enregister such a law ; and the occasion afforded him an opportunity of safely expressing principles, and proposing measures, which, under other circumstances, could not have been hinted at without creating suspicion and alarm.

But the plans of the persecutors, and the fears of the reformers, had assumed a consistency which refused to yield to any temporary resistance. L'Hôpital insisted on the necessity of assembling the States-General, and calling a national council. His advice was taken ; but the prince of Condé had already commenced hostilities. The city of Lyons was attacked by one of his followers ; and, though the enterprise failed, and the prince escaped being publicly compromised in the affair, his proceedings were clearly understood by the ever watchful eye of the duke of Guise and his brother. With a policy which answered admirably to the character of the age and the dominant parties, no intimation was allowed to escape which could warn the prince of his danger. His pride and his courage urged him forward.

When informed by his friends that ruin awaited him, if he ventured to approach the court, "They dare not attack me," was his answer to the representations thus made; and he entered Orleans, where the king of Navarre, and other distinguished men of the party, already found themselves involved in the meshes of the net spread for them by the duke of Guise. Both the king and the prince were made prisoners. The former was little feared. His known weakness and irresolution gave his enemies a constant advantage over him; and though he might prove formidable when joined in action with bolder men, it was felt that, separated from them, his ruin might safely be deferred. The prince of Condé, on the contrary, was the man of all others to be dreaded at this juncture of affairs. Admired for his vigour of character, possessed of hereditary claims to honour, and skilled in all the arts which fit a man to become the leader of angry multitudes, he was regarded by the oppressed Calvinists, and the disaffected of every class, as their natural guide and protector.

It would have been contrary to the usual maxims of courts, at this period, to let such a man escape, when once secured, though there had been far less reason for his apprehension than there was in the case of the prince. But he had taken a part in the late insurrections which brought him fairly within the range of judicial inquiry; and when a commission was appointed to try him, the only thing of which he had to complain, was the rejection of his appeal from a species of secret tribunal to the open and unsuspected judgment of his peers, and the states of the realm.

The sentence of the commission devoted the prince to the scaffold. Consternation reigned in the party of which he was the leader at the announcement of his fate. Entreaties offered by his wife, and followed by those of the duchess of Ferrara, and the duchess de Montpensier, made no impression on the heart of the king. Even the politic reasoning of the chancellor, the

pressing representations of the queen-mother, always anxious to diminish the authority of the Guises, failed of success. The hours of the prince were numbered ; the preparations for his death were to be forthwith commenced ; but Francis felt that the sight of blood, shed on a scaffold by a prince of his own line, would leave terrible thoughts in his mind. He was, therefore, to leave Orleans before the day of execution. On the evening preceding his departure he attended vespers, but in the midst of the service he fell into a deep swoon ; on awaking from which he was found to be labouring under an affection of the brain, which in a few days terminated his existence. *

A new scene was opened by the accession of Charles IX., and the regency of the politic and ambitious Catherine de' Medicis. The virtuous chancellor de l'Hôpital took advantage of the moderation which she affected in the first moments of her triumph, to propose measures that might lead to the pacification of the country. But the seeds of discord were too widely sown ; they had begun to spring up under circumstances the most favourable to their growth ; and the wisdom of a few, or the temporary change of court counsels, could never of itself clear the land of the obnoxious weeds.

The most ready method which presented itself of reconciling the religious parties was that of assembling their chiefs in conference. Calvin himself received an invitation to attend the meeting at Poissi in 1561. He refused it in his own person ; but sent Beza as his representative, and that of his party. The disputes at this celebrated conference were carried on in the presence of the king, the queen-mother, and the splendend train of distinguished persons who formed their court. Fifty-two prelates crowded the hall ; and, in their hearing, the amiable de l'Hôpital insisted on the necessity of ecclesiastical reform. But the chancellor spoke not as a theologian, and his rank and character commanded respect, and even obedience. The feelings

* Thuanus, t. i. p. 715. Lacretelle.

inspired by the address of Beza had nothing of this kind to subdue or qualify them. He prayed with a fervour, and expressed himself in language, which, for a time, so charmed the audience, that polemical wrath allowed itself to be soothed into silence. But the spell once broken, the train fired by his near approach to the main points of the controversy, murmurs of indignation soon evinced how little the prelates of France were inclined to receive lessons from the ally of Calvin. An observation, intended to show the untenable nature of the doctrine of the real presence, threw the assembly into a paroxysm of wrath. The cardinal de Tournon was the first to speak; and looking towards the youthful monarch, he besought him to close his breast against the poison contained in this false and heretical address. In a similar strain, the cardinal of Lorraine exclaimed, "Would that this man had been mute, or we deaf!" There was too much moderation in this expression to please the more violent of the bishops. But the cardinal had learnt somewhat of wisdom by the changes which had taken place. He could no longer perform the part of grand inquisitor; and, while the reformers were every day gathering strength, the state of France was becoming proportionally less fitted to encourage the hope that arbitrary proceedings would prove successful. In his concluding address, therefore, he was so far from yielding to the fanatical spirit of the violent advisers of persecution, that he promised certain measures of reform; and, though he defended with skill and energy the points opposed by Beza, yet he spoke with so much temper, that, at the close of the conference, he was accused of favouring the heretics, and almost fostering heresy.

Anxious to obtain even an appearance of conciliation, Catherine de' Medicis directed some of the mildest of the theologians of each party to hold a private conference, at the close of the public debates. This was agreed to, and a general confession on certain important points was drawn up, which satisfied the car-

dinal of Lorraine, but provoked more than ever the indignation of his associates. The article on the eucharist was purposely indefinite as to the real presence. "We confess," says this part of the creed, "that Jesus Christ, in his Holy Supper, presents, gives, and truly exhibits the substance of his body and of his blood, by the operation of his Holy Spirit; and that we receive, and eat sacramentally, spiritually, and by faith, this his body which died for us, that we may be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; that we may thereby be vivified, and perceive all that which is necessary for our salvation. And seeing that faith, resting on the word of God, makes and renders present the things which are promised, and that by this faith we truly, and indeed, take the true and natural body of our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, in this respect, we confess the presence of the body and of the blood of Christ, in the holy supper. In so far, moreover, as faith renders the things promised present, and that this faith takes truly the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of his Holy Spirit, in this respect we confess the presence of his body and his blood in the Holy Supper, in which he presents, gives, and veritably exhibits the substance of his body and his blood, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and we then receive and eat spiritually and by faith, that body which died for us, that we may be bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, that we may be vivified, and perceive all that pertains to our salvation."*

The cardinal, by giving his assent to this article of the confession awakened still stronger suspicions of his inclination to favour some of the views of the protestants. But, whatever might be the momentary impressions, or policy, of the cardinal, the reformers had little reason to rejoice in the acquiescence of a man whose whole conduct was ruled by a dark and designing policy. Their true protector, at this period, was the chancellor de l'Hôpital. To his influence they were indebted for the publication of

* Lacreteille.

an edict in January 1562, which secured them from any of those sudden invasions of their lives and liberties, till then so constantly to be apprehended. By this edict, they obtained the right of holding religious assemblies in the neighbourhood of towns; in return for which privilege they were to allow the peaceable collection of tithes, and to make no attempt which might savour of resistance to the constituted authorities either of church or state.

It rarely happens that any suddenly acquired advantage is employed with discretion by large bodies of men. The first impulses of freedom fill the heart with too much joy and pride to yield readily to caution. There will always, moreover, be found some to whom the measure given will only be valued as they deceive themselves into the notion of its being the whole desired. Thus the preachers of the reformed church had no sooner gained the important privilege of exercising their functions, under the sanction of the law, than they began to abuse this advantage by launching out into the language of bitter reproof against their opponents, and adopting a freedom of speculation which seemed to set at naught every hope of harmony as to either doctrine or discipline.

Enraged at the temper thus evinced, the more violent of the catholics found every day some fresh reason to accuse the calvinists of heresy and treason. Moderate men continually trembled at the precipitancy with which their respective leaders resolved and acted. But affairs were now in a state which allowed no hope of peace till sacrifices should be made on both sides, that demanded more spirituality than existed on either. The mildest therefore, as well as the most bigotted and violent, soon became involved in the same dark stream of zeal, passion, lust of power, or lust of liberty.

But, whatever might be the illegality of the prince of Condé's or Coligni's proceedings, or whatever the indiscretion of some of the reformed preachers we should in vain seek for a palliative to the base and barbarous

conduct of the government. Giving a commission to Montluc, an old and iron-hearted soldier, to correct the freedom of the protestants, the court laid bare a sword which, scarcely dry from the battle-field, thirsted for more sanguinary triumphs. The reformers of Cahors had been goaded to madness by the cruelties they suffered at the hands of the populace, and the baron de Fumel. Some peasants avenged themselves by murdering the latter; and Montluc was despatched, ostensibly, not only to punish the Hugonots, but the inhabitants of Cahors, who, in their barbarous zeal, had slaughtered vast numbers of the defenceless reformers. Forgetting that he was the instrument of justice, he avenged the death of the baron de Fumel; but despised the orphans and widows, whose tears were the only proof that could be given of the horrors which had been perpetrated. Seventy unfortunate persons had fallen beneath the hands of the populace, that ever fierce executioner. Montluc rejoiced in multiplying the victims of this frightful abandonment of justice; and the certainty of impunity encouraging the people to continue their persecutions, every part of the country began to stream with the blood of massacred protestants.

While popular violence was thus allowed to rage unresisted, the heads of the reformed party enjoyed a seeming respect at court, which might have lulled the wisest politicians into security. Catherine de' Medicis hoped, for a time, that they might be made supporters of her authority against those who feared her talents and hated her ambition. But the impossibility of such a union was soon discovered; and the duke of Guise, invited to occupy his former station, and throwing off the veil which he had for awhile assumed, came forth as an enemy to protestantism whose fierceness, at least, in this instance, was exceeded by that of Catherine de' Medicis herself. His return to the seat of government was signalised by a tumult in the little town of Vassi*, where his attendants, having first pro-

* Lacretelle. t. ii. liv. v. p. 62.

voked the Calvinists to rise in self-defence, then assailed them with their swords till the road through the village was strewn with 200 wounded and 60 dead. On being reminded of the edict of January, he exclaimed, "Detestable edict. This arm will help to break it!"*

We have not space to unfold the long and intricate plot which, developed by feuds and jealousies, working like a subterranean fire, at length appeared perfected in the doom which devoted the Hugonots to destruction. The feeble king of Navarre had become by turns the slave of the queen and of the duke of Guise. Condé had sustained his dignity and firmness amidst all the changes to which the court was subject. While such were the circumstances of the great, the people at large were in a state bordering on civil war. The various parliaments passed edicts which, under the pretext of supporting the laws, did little more than excite the multitude to fresh acts of violence. At length came the catastrophe. An army was raised on both sides to determine whether Romanism should continue to enjoy the absolute command of men's consciences, or the principle of reformation emancipate them from a bondage alike injurious to the improvement of society, and the common interests of Christianity.

The siege of Rouen, obstinately defended by Montgomeri, now become a leader of the protestants, afforded the first opportunity for a great trial of strength between the two parties. A ball from the ramparts inflicted a mortal wound on the king of Navarre; and his death was avenged by the ruin of the besieged city. Innumerable executions followed the pillage of this noble town, and the parliament seemed to vie with the army in its sanguinary triumphs. But Condé and Coligni were at the head of a body of troops whose vigour and enthusiasm were as yet unwasted. The brother of the latter, moreover, the heroic Dandelot, had 7000 Germans under his command. Thus supported, the protestants again raised their heads, and, after some further

* Lacretelle. Thuanus, t. ii. p. 116

encounters, were in a state to insist on conditions of peace that favoured the prospect of permanent tranquillity.

But suspicions of the darkest kind infected both parties. The duke of Guise had fallen by the hand of an assassin named Poltrot; and the murderer, while writhing under the rack, sought a momentary relief by pronouncing the names of Beza and Coligni as among the chief of his accomplices. Few credited so base an accusation insinuated of men whose honour and piety were as remarkable as their zeal for the reformed religion. But the poison of jealousy and hatred continued to work in the veins of the nation till the restless barbarity of Catherine found its might again satiate itself with the horrors of civil war. By an artifice as treacherous as the design which it supported was sanguinary, an army of 10,000 Spaniards was allowed to penetrate the heart of France, that it might the more effectually destroy the protestants of the Netherlands. The prince of Condé and Coligni immediately adopted their plan of action. A brilliant experiment on the valour of the enemy brought them to the gates of Paris. The battle of St. Denis was fought on the 10th of November 1567; but victory deciding against the protestants, the leaders and their hardy bands were obliged to make a rapid retreat into Champagne. Peace was restored at the beginning of 1568, but with as little security for its continuance as before. Scarcely had it been declared, when attempts were formed to seize the persons of the chiefs of the party, who only escaped the meditated injustice by a hasty flight. The prince of Condé gathered his forces together at La Rochelle, and, on the 16th of March, 1569 was fought the battle of Jarnac, in which that brave and chivalrous defender, but not ornament, of the protestant party, ended his eventful career.

Coligni, by the death of the prince of Condé, and that of his brother Dandelot, which occurred shortly after, was become the sole hope and champion of the

Hugonots. It would have been well had he occupied the same position from the beginning. He was calm, determined, and consistent ; and whatever errors he might commit could be ascribed neither to passion nor frivolity. He earnestly sighed for peace, and, though circumstances obliged him to continue the war with all the vigour he possessed, the first opportunity which presented itself for ceasing from hostilities was gladly and sincerely embraced. The conditions of peace were signed in August, 1570, and, from the seeming readiness of the government to make large concessions in favour of tranquility, hopes were again entertained that the wounds of the country might yet be healed.

Charles IX. was emancipated from the control of his mother as regent ; but her bad influence reigned with a daily increasing power over his heart. Though still a youth, every feeling of honour and humanity had been sacrificed, and he could meditate with pleasure on the perpetration of crimes almost unparalleled in the history of tyranny. " Come, my father," said he to the venerable Coligni on his return to court, " Come, and let me press you to my heart. We hold you now ; you shall not escape us any more." So perfect even was the young monarch in the arts of deception, that he permitted the pope and the king of Spain to look suspiciously on his conduct rather than reveal the black designs of which his mind was full.

The marriage of the prince of Bearuy, son of the amiable and virtuous queen of Navarre, with Margaret de Valois, was proposed as the best seal which could be set to the reconciliation of the catholic and the reformed party. Coligni listened to the proposition with joy and gratitude. Equally satisfactory to him was the promise of the king, that an army should be put under his command, and that it should be for him to deliver the unfortunate inhabitants of the Low Countries from the intolerable yoke of the duke of Alba. Every sentiment and measure of the government, for the time, cor-

responded with these proceedings, and neither Coligni, nor the other chiefs of the hugonots, entertained any suspicion of its sincerity. The queen of Navarre alone appears to have felt the misgivings of an intended victim. Arrived in Paris, she sighed at the spectacle of licentiousness and ambition which on all sides presented itself to view. Her melancholy was seen and understood ; and a sudden and mysterious death removed her from the eyes of those who dreaded her scrutinising glances. Suspicion still slept, and the plot grew ripe in the hearts of the king and his few infamous coadjutors.*

The marriage of the young king of Navarre with Margaret de Valois took place on the 18th of August, 1572. Death, armed at all points, awaited with impatience the celebration of this ill-omened union. Three days after its celebration the king desired the attendance of Coligni in his closet ; and entered into a long discourse respecting the armament to be prepared for the Netherlands. On returning to his hotel, he was shot at by the preceptor of the young duke of Guise, who watched him as he passed his window, and then fled, secured by the means provided for his escape. The wounds inflicted were not mortal ; and the seeming grief and solicitude of the king more than repaid the still unsuspecting Coligni for the pain he suffered. " Oh, my father ! " exclaimed Charles, " Yours is the wound, but mine the pain. I swear to you that I will take such vengeance that it shall never be effaced from the memory of man."

A terrible presentiment of some awful event began to oppress the hugonots of Paris at this moment. They pressed round the house where their venerated leader lay ; and the king, his mother, and the rest of his advisers beheld with dread the rising wrath of their destined victims. It was instinctively discovered that, should it once break forth, nothing would be able to stem the onset of the infuriated people. A council

* Thuanus, t. ii. p. 659. Lacreteille.

assembled in the palace of the Tuileries. Its discussions were closed with the hideous announcement of the king, "I consent to the massacre of the hugonots: but take heed that not one is left alive to reproach me for it."

It was the eve of St. Bartholemew, and the meditated slaughter was to commence at midnight. The whole of the evening was employed in placing the troops, and the most desperate zealots of the city, in positions favourable for their executing the work surely and rapidly. Collected together in one of the apartments of the Louvre, the king and his associates awaited with impatience, and secret horror of soul, the hour appointed for commencing the slaughter. Twelve o'clock at length sounded from the tower of the neighbouring church. The shrill clang of the tocsin followed; and the city woke from its peaceful slumbers to witness scenes which we dare scarcely contemplate even in imagination. Coligni was among the first that fell. His blood had been long sought by the duke of Guise, who refused to be convinced that he was not concerned in the murder of his father.

Starting from their beds, the wretched hugonots listened for an instant to the shouts of the murtherers, and then rushed into the streets, where they were instantly seized and butchered. Neither age nor sex furnished any plea for mercy. The old and young, the tenderest females and the boldest men, fell equally under the knives of the assassins. No sanctuary existed either for the poor or the rich. The most wretched hovel had blood upon its threshold; and even the Louvre itself was polluted by all the horrors of murder. There perished the count de la Rochefoucault, a companion of Charles in his most sportive hours, and whom he had lodged in the palace from a passing wish to save him. There too the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé would have perished in a similar manner but for the dread which their rank inspired.

Among the distinguished men who shared the fate of

Coligni, were Clermont de Piles, Soubise, Mortemart, and others ; nor would one of the protestant chiefs have escaped, had it not been that several of them lodged in more retired parts of the city ; and the assassins sent into these quarters loitered on the way to partake in the sanguinary feast of sacrifices nearer at hand. Alarmed at the cries which rose through the stillness of the night, the inhabitants of the faubourgs communicated their apprehensions to each other, and, by break of day, were fully aware of their situation.

Unwearied and unsatiated with the horrors of the night, the ferocious bands, covered with blood and gore, watched the approach of dawn as opening a new scene in the awful drama. Still traversing the streets, under the guidance of the nobles who had undertaken to be their leaders, the day rose broad upon them, and again declined without witnessing any cessation of the slaughter. Evening and night came. The king was almost satisfied with the vengeance he had enjoyed. His palace-gates were barricaded with heaps of slain, and the avenues leading to it ran with blood. One wretch alone boasted that he had butchered 400 men, women, and children, with his own hand. Charles faintly directed that the work should now cease ; but his orders were unheeded. There was still the gleanings to come after the harvest. Deliberate search could be made for those whose circumstances or station had hitherto preserved them from the knife. Among the victims of this class was the celebrated Ramus, who, from his professor's chair at the Royal College, had delivered discourses which effected more than almost any compositions hitherto known in lessening the authority of the schoolmen. He fell, melancholy to be said, by the hands of murderers, led to his chamber by his rival Charpentier.*

Another and another day arose, and still the massacre continued. Victims then failed the assassins, and the king and his infamous cortège were contented with their

* Thuanus, lib. liii. p. 33. Lacreteille.

work. But no sooner had the excitement of the slaughter ceased, than the monarch began to discover that he had incurred an awful debt, which the justice of God and nations would sooner or later compel him to discharge. At first, the terrors of conscience filled him with the anticipations of despair. The dread of having his conduct subjected to the inquiry of the parliament, occupied his thoughts with objects which demanded instant attention. With the promptitude which characterises the workings of a weak mind oppressed by fear, he immediately despatched letters into the provinces, declaring to the magistrates that not he, but the duke of Guise, was the author of the massacre. Compelled by the Guises to retract this daring falsehood, in the midst of his assembled council, he ventured to proclaim that all had been done by his commands. In saying this, however, he asserted, with as bold a violation of truth as in the former case, that the chief of the protestants had brought the evil upon themselves by having conspired to slay not only himself, but his mother and his two brethren. Palpable as was the falsehood, the distinguished men who heard him dare not show any signs of incredulity, however strongly convinced they might be that there was not a shadow of truth in the assertion ; and more than one of them, allowing their fears to get the better of their honesty as well as humanity, disgraced themselves by echoing his sentiments. Among these was Christopher de Thou, the father of the historian, and the advocate-general, Pibrac ; but the latter, before concluding his speech, begged the king to renew his orders for the cessation of the massacre. His persuasions were crowned with success, and the slaughter in the capital was discontinued.*

But this frightful transaction was not like the result of a popular tumult, the effects of which may cease as instantaneously as they are produced. Though the massacre was for the most part stopped at Paris, it was now but beginning in the provinces ; the magistrates

* Thuanus. —

of which had received particular orders from Charles, to attack the Calvinists without mercy. At Meux, Rouen, Orleans, Troyes, Bourges, Lyons, and Toulouse, the scenes which had taken place at Paris were repeated with every circumstance of horror which could render them fit imitations of their original. At the last-mentioned city, the parliament of which had been always celebrated for the bigotry of most of its members, five counsellors were hung in their robes of state; and, from one end of the kingdom to another, distrust, revenge, and assassination, reigned with unlimited power. When Charles conceived that the number of the hugonots had been sufficiently diminished in the provinces, as well as in the capital, he pursued a line of policy as distinguished for its utter contradiction of truth as that which he had employed in addressing his parliament. In the communications made to the public authorities in the several towns where the massacre had been most terrible, he declared that the duke of Guise and his party were the sole authors of the evils which had occurred, and that it was owing to his own exertions that tranquillity had been restored in the capital. The Guises, on discovering this artifice of Charles to place all the odium of the transaction upon them, hastened to the palace, and expostulated with him in the strongest terms on such a breach of faith and honesty. Charles, unable to reply, was confounded at the situation in which he saw himself placed: a powerful family, on the one side, forbidding him to attempt the only excuse he could make, and the principal states of Europe, on the other, ready to overwhelm him with reproach and ruin if he avowed his share in the infamous transaction.* While he was yet pondering on the words of the duke of Guise, his mother entered his apartment; and, perceiving his dejection, roused him with the energy characteristic of her mind, as active and politic as her disposition was cruel, to pursue a bolder line of policy. "How can you be so feeble, my son," said she, "after having dared so much"

* Thuanus, lib. lii. p. 21. Lacretelle.

To proclaim that the Guises have been able to massacre 3000 of your subjects, and many of them persons of distinction, with impunity, before your eyes, is the same as to say that Paris belongs to them, and that they reign in your place. Nor would such an assertion be credited. You will fall into contempt ; and it is much more dangerous for a king to inspire contempt than fear. You wish to render the Guises odious ; you will only make them more formidable. Acknowledge this terrible justice executed on the heretics ; acknowledge the massacre at Paris ; and, by that means, you will be able to destroy all the heretics in the kingdom, instead of leaving those who have encountered our resentment an army wherewith to avenge themselves."

The counsels thus given by the queen-mother were rendered plausible by the circumstance, that the protestants still existed in considerable numbers in different parts of the kingdom ; and that, among the survivors, were several men of rank and ability. On the night when the massacre commenced at Paris, an order was given to a strong detachment of soldiers to proceed to the fauxbourg Saint-Germain, in which many protestants resided who had not thought it necessary to remove into the immediate vicinity of Coligni's abode. The troop, however, met with so much occupation in its progress that it was dispersed before it reached its destination. This being learnt at the palace, another was sent on the same service ; but, in the confusion of the moment, the keys of the gate leading to the fauxbourg could not be found, and a delay was thus occasioned of the highest importance to the hugonots. Warned by the clamour which reached their ears, they were not long in discovering the peril of their situation, or the fate which already attended their brethren in the city. But the night was spent in doubting what measures ought to be pursued. Some proposed to make a desperate effort to succour their friends ; others were infatuated enough to believe that it was only an unauthorised attack of the Guises, and that the king would immediately put it down.

The rest, and they appear to have formed the greater number, advocated instant flight ; and several boats being discovered in the morning conveying parties of men along the river, they instantly mounted their horses, and riding at full gallop, reached Montfort l'Amaury in safety.*

Another cause of uneasiness to the king was the evident disinclination of many of his catholic subjects to execute his wishes on their being first made known. One instance of this kind occurred which ought never to be forgotten. Among the magistrates to whom the order for attacking the protestants was sent, was the governor of Bayonne, the vicompte d'Orthe ; and it was thus that excellent man dared to answer his royal master, when forgetful of justice and humanity : " Sire, I have communicated the commandment of your majesty to your faithful subjects and troops of this fortress. I have found in it good citizens and brave soldiers, but not a single assassin. I have, on this account, very humbly to supplicate your majesty, that you would be graciously pleased to employ our heads and our lives in something that we can perform." The king's answer to this epistle was a commission to some abandoned wretch to imprison the count ; and, it is melancholy to add, that, a few days after writing the above, he fell a victim to his high-minded and generous conduct.

The bishop of Lisieux afforded another example of humanity, and with less fatal consequences to himself. This venerable prelate had been the preceptor of princes, and was of the Dominican order. On receiving an intimation from the king's lieutenant at Lisieux that orders had been sent him for putting the Calvinists to the sword, this truly Christian bishop replied, " You shall not execute such orders. Those whom you wish to slaughter are my sheep ; sheep gone astray, it is true, but I will labour to bring them back into the fold. I cannot see in the gospel that the shepherd ought to let the blood of his sheep be shed ; on the contrary, I read

* Lacretelle, t. 2. liv. vii. p. 346.

there that he ought to pour out his own for their sakes. I will never execute this order so long as God shall preserve my life, which I ought to consecrate entire to the spiritual and temporal good of my flock." Fleury remarks, that the bishop of Lisieux converted nearly all the heretics of his diocese, so deeply were they affected by his tenderness and charity. Reform, in fact, must have made no little progress, if not in name, yet in reality, under such a man ; for it would be difficult to believe that the religion of Charles IX., of Mary de Medicis, and the cardinal of Lorraine, was the same as his in whom the Spirit of our Saviour was so powerfully manifested.

We may profitably add one more instance of a similar kind. Sigognes, the governor of Dieppe, on receiving the order, issued a summons for all the inhabitants of the place, of whatever religion they might be, to assemble in the Hôtel de Ville. He thus addressed the meeting :—" Messieurs, the order I have received can only regard rebellious and seditious Calvinists ; but, thanks be to the Eternal, there are no longer any such in Dieppe. We read in the gospel that the love of God and of our neighbour should be the law and the prophets to Christians. Let us make use of this lesson given us by Jesus Christ himself. Children of the same God, let us live as brothers, and cherish for each other the charity of the Samaritan. Such are my sentiments : I trust you will participate in them ; they are the feelings which have made me believe that there is not in this town any citizen unworthy of life.

But notwithstanding the opposition thus shown to the sanguinary edict, the slaughter which followed its publication was immense. The palace of the Louvre has been described as flowing with blood, and the waters of the Rhone were long rendered fetid by the crowds of dead that floated on its surface. According to the commonly received estimates, the number of persons who perished in the slaughter was between 40,000 and 50,000 ; and, to add to the horror of this dreadful massacre, many of those who fell in it were the victims, as much of

private hate and resentment as of fanaticism and ambition in its authors. There is, however, comparatively little to surprise us in finding that, often during the massacre, the creditor perished by the hand of his debtor, the rival by the hand of his competitor, and the offender by that of the injured, when we hear of men of science and erudition availing themselves of the confusion to murder their opponents in a literary dispute.*

The recital which the celebrated Sully has left of his narrow escape, amid the horrors which surrounded him on the night of St. Bartholomew, exhibits a lively picture of the terrific scene, by the hand of an eye-witness. "I went to bed," says Sully, "at rather an early hour, but, about three o'clock in the morning, was awoke by the tolling of the bells, and by the confused cries of the populace. Saint Julien, my governor, rushed out with my valet to learn the cause of the tumult: I have never since heard of these two men, but they were without doubt sacrificed among the first to the fury of the people. I was thus left alone, and was continuing to dress myself when my host entered the room pale and trembling. He was a protestant; but having heard what was likely to happen, he had taken the precaution of going to mass to save his life, and keep his house from being pillaged. The purpose of his visit to me was to persuade me to do the same, and accompany him to mass. I did not think proper to do so, and resolved upon endeavouring to reach the College de Bourgogne, in which I was pursuing my studies, notwithstanding its distance from the house in which I lodged, which rendered the undertaking in no slight degree perilous. I dressed myself in the student's gown, and, taking a great pair of books under my arm, descended to the door. On entering the street I was seized with horror

* Such was the fury which excited the spirits of men of every class in this hour of darkness, that the murder of the learned Peter Ramus was attended with circumstances which even added to the horror of his assassination. De Thou relates, that when his body had been pierced by the daggers of the murderers, it was almost torn to pieces by the students of the rival philosophy.

to see a number of infuriated men returning from all parts, and breaking into houses, while they cried, "Kill the hugonots! kill, massacre the hugonots!" The blood which I saw spilt before my eyes, redoubled my terror, and at last I fell in with a corps-de-garde, which stopped me. I was questioned, and began to experience some rough treatment, when the books under my arm was perceived, and, fortunately for me, served in the place of a passport. I again fell into the same danger, and was again happy enough to escape. At length I reached the College de Bourgogne, where a danger awaited me greater than any I had as yet encountered. The porter twice refused to admit me, and I had to remain in the middle of the street, at the mercy of the infuriated rabble, which was every moment increasing, and greedily seeking its prey. At last I conceived the idea of inquiring for the principal of the college, whose name was Lafaye, a man of excellent disposition, and who had a great regard for me. Some pieces of money induced the porter to comply with my request, and call Lafaye to me. That kind-hearted man took me into his chamber; but two inhuman priests were there at the same time, who appeared to be talking of the Sicilian vespers, and who endeavoured to snatch me from his hands in order to tear me to pieces, saying that the order was to kill even infants at the breast. All that Lafaye was able to do, was to conduct me, with all possible secresy, to a remote cabinet, in which he left me locked up."

The escape of Merlin, one of the officers of the admiral Coligni, was still more remarkable. Having got upon the roofs of the houses with Teligni, who perished as soon as he descended into the street, he found himself, being exceedingly infirm and short-sighted, unable to follow his young companion. In this situation he let himself down into a hayloft, and lay concealed for several days between the wall and the manger, his head nearly covered with the rubbish which had followed his descent. During the time he remained in this condition, he

suffered the extreme of hunger, and was only saved from perishing by a hen, which, providentially for him, lay three eggs within his reach. Many thousands of those who escaped the swords of the assassins were far less fortunate than Merlin: obliged to fly without clothes or money, they perished from cold and hunger; and it was almost solely owing to the noble benevolence of the Montmorencis that any of the fugitive protestants were preserved from the same miserable fate.

It is not necessary for our purpose to follow the history of the persecuted Calvinists, from this period, with the same minuteness as in the earlier part of the narrative. Charles IX., it will be sufficient to observe, had little reason to congratulate himself on the success of his sanguinary plot. His life, from St. Bartholemew's day, was clouded with ill-concealed remorse; and, though endowed with far less sense than cunning, he seems now to have been occasionally able to comprehend, with perfect correctness, how atrocious and impolitic was the persecution he had instituted. In his last hours he was attended by a protestant nurse, and he is reported to have said to her one day, in a paroxysm of agony, "Oh me, that I should ever have followed wicked counsel! My God, pardon me! have mercy on me! I know not where I am. What will be the end of all this? What ought I to do? I see it well enough,—I am lost!"

Had there in fact been no terror of conscience to disturb the mind of the dying monarch, the situation of his kingdom would have presented a sufficient cause for alarm. The protestants, though deprived of their venerable chief, and greatly thinned in numbers, had still many men among them in whose abilities they might safely place reliance; and the reasons for their uniting in mutual defence were now so much increased, that those who had resolved upon revenging their slaughtered brethren were sure of finding an army of brave confederates ready at the first signal of war. A desperate but partial conflict took place immediately after

the massacre ; and, though peace had been again proclaimed, Charles still found himself surrounded with peril, and saw the horrors of civil war gathering with unopposed rapidity from one corner of his kingdom to another. Even the comfort which he might have expected to receive from the applauses of those engaged in supporting the same faith as himself was denied him. The only catholic prince who appears to have expressed any hearty concurrence in the plot was the dark-minded and tyrannical king of Spain, a man whose character seems to render it doubtful whether bigotry be the mother or the offspring of ferocity. The pope, it is true, forgot to support the character, or to express the feelings, of a Christian bishop ; and, by appearing to praise a deed so contrary to humanity and religion as the late massacre, he was guilty of a conduct which deeply involves his memory in the contempt and odium which belong to that of Charles. He is, however, said to have expressed a feeling of doubt as to the propriety of the slaughter, which tends to support the belief, that he was more imbecile than cruel, and that it was rather because he supposed himself obliged to do so, than because he really admired the action, that he applauded the conduct of the French king. According to the report alluded to, a flood of tears burst from his eyes while listening to the anthems with which God was praised for the triumph of the Catholics in the late massacre ; and deeply agitated he exclaimed, “ Who can assure me that numbers of innocent people have not perished ? ” But, notwithstanding this, the rejoicings continued ; and in the very evening of the day when he wept at the thought that hundreds of guiltless creatures might have fallen victims to an evil policy fostered by himself, Rome was cheered by the firing of cannon from the ramparts of St. Angelo, and no means were spared to convince the catholics of Europe that their cause had gained an advantage by the devotion of the French king, which should entitle him to the highest honours the faithful could confer. There was

still, however, a want of heartiness in all that was done to assure Charles that he had acted with good policy ; and, while his own party was evidently in doubt as to how far it would be safe to applaud his conduct, the protestant princes, and our queen Elizabeth among the foremost, received intelligence of the massacre in a manner which foreboded the most terrible consequences. The rapid progress of disease saved the monarch from the anticipated evils ; and his death, which occurred in the twenty-fifth year of his age and the fifteenth of his reign, left only his name and memory to suffer the ignominy which had else been heaped upon his person.*

The accession of the duke of Anjou gave additional strength to the most enthusiastic and fanatical party in the kingdom. His superstition, his love of ceremonies, and almost entire forgetfulness of his duty as a monarch in his anxiety to perform those of a devotee, qualified him, in an eminent manner, to direct the motions of men who had sacrificed every law of humanity to the impulse of a blind and barbarous zeal. The difficulty, however, of his situation was not to be lessened by these means. It was evident to the least skilful in politics that the protestants had it still in their power to shake the security of the throne. The king of Navarre, who, together with the prince of Condé, had been induced to offer an apparent recantation of his principles, had escaped from court, and now openly declared that his late conduct was entirely owing to the imminent peril in which his life was placed immediately after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. In every part of the country numerous bands were assembled, who only awaited the summons of their leaders to march in a body against the common enemy, and civil war was already, in some quarters, raging with the same fury as at the beginning of the troubles. Henry, trembling at the storm which he saw approaching, determined to avert it by timely conces-

* Lacretelle.

sions; and a new edict was published, by which the hugonots were once more placed in a state of religious freedom. But this was no sooner done than the more violent of the catholics pretended to consider their religion in danger, and every head was at work to contrive some plan which might serve as an antidote to the king's imprudent measure of toleration. Among the principal actors on this occasion was the young duke of Guise, and, by his constant attention to the object he had in view, he succeeded in forming a league, which embraced in the list of its members all the nobility, and a great proportion of the chief towns and cities. To this league the king of Spain and the pope were in the highest degree favourable; and Henry allowed a plot to be pursued which was far more formidable to his own authority than to the safety of the protestants. But the intention of the leaguers to interfere with his prerogatives was too evident to escape observation long, and, by a stroke of policy superior to what was to be expected from a man of his character, he placed himself at the head of the association, defeating by that means the ambitious projects of the duke of Guise, who, had he been allowed to remain the chief of the league, would have possessed an authority far superior to that of the monarch.

But if the reign of Charles IX. was rendered infamous by the slaughter of so many of his subjects, that of Henry III., while marked by sanguinary tumults almost as terrible, was rendered far more infamous by the total corruption of manners which prevailed in every class of society. It was during the plague of Athens and of Florence, that the seed was sown which produced so rank a harvest of licentiousness in those states, and it is not difficult to trace the grosser corruption which now enveloped, like a black cloud, almost the whole of France to the bloody scenes of which it had so lately been the theatre. Never, indeed, was guilt more fearfully punished than that of France in the sixteenth century. Its rulers had fostered a ferocious zeal in their people;

and when it broke down the barrier of law and humanity to reach its victims, it let in a crowd of the worst demons that ever ravaged the fair fields of civilisation. Fanaticism, gorged with blood, turned from its horrible feast to wallow in the grossest sensuality : the laws of nature were treated with as great a contempt as those of religion ; and the language of Scripture, when describing the vices which brought down destruction on the mighty cities of old, might be applied to France, at this period, without any alteration. Murder, in the mean time, not content with the common slaughter which was every day taking place in different quarters of the kingdom, was the active minister of private hatred ; and the duke of Guise and his brother were both assassinated, by order of the king, within a few hours of each other.

The dagger which Henry had thus impiously unsheathed, was soon after turned against himself. On the 1st of August, 1589, he was informed that a young Dominican desired to acquaint him with some matter of importance. Ignorant of his danger, he admitted the assassin to a private audience, and was instantly stabbed. Jacques Clement, by whose hand he fell, was the creature of the duchess de Montpensier, who found in him a fit instrument to revenge the murder of her brothers. The death of the monarch, who expired the day after that on which he was wounded, was regarded as a signal blessing ; and the populace, taught to regard him as the enemy of the church, expressed their satisfaction by bonfires and revelries of every description ; blessing the memory of the regicide, who had been put to death by the royal guards, as that of a true martyr of Jesus Christ. The leaguers tortured their imaginations to promote this expression of popular feeling. A statue of Jacques Clement was placed in the cathedral, bearing the inscription, " Saint Jacques Clement, pray for us ! " And his mother, a poor peasant woman, was addressed by the priests in the same words as had been used respecting the mother of our Lord : — " Blessed be the womb that bore thee, and the breasts which thou hast

sucked." This was sufficiently appalling ; but the conduct of the pope was still more so. In full consistory, he placed Jacques Clement among the saints of the church, giving him a rank above Judith and Eleazer, and publicly ordered that the most magnificent funeral rites should be performed in honour of his memory, declaring, at the same time, that the king was unworthy of any Christian burial. The cardinal de Lenoncour, who was ambassador from France, could not suffer this outrage upon the common feelings of reasonable men to pass unnoticed, and, rising indignantly from his seat, he exclaimed, " What do I hear ? Can it be possible that the head of the church applauds the assassination of a monarch ! I depart, overcome with horror." The pope, it is said, though violent in his temper, cast a look at his bold reprover which seemed to confess that the rebuke was just.

The accession of the king of Navarre, though at first affording but a doubtful promise of peace, was soon after productive of blessings which will ever render the name of Henri Quartre dear to France. His abjuration of the protestant faith would be difficult to justify ; but, if a recantation of principles ever admitted of a palliating excuse, it was in the case of this benevolent and excellent monarch. The course he pursued seemed to offer the only possible means of saving his people from the horrors of famine and a protracted civil war ; and it should ever be remembered, that his history affords an instance, rarely to be met with, of a man's changing his principles on becoming possessed of power, but continuing to watch over the interests of the party he has left with the deepest anxiety and affection.

By his publication of the celebrated Edict of Nantes, Henry placed the safety of the protestants on a foundation that could only be removed by a violation of public justice ; which, it was to be hoped, no monarch of France would henceforth have the temerity to commit. For nearly a century this hope was fulfilled ; and the hugonots continued to enjoy the religious freedom thus

afforded them, till Louis XIV., by revoking the edict, perpetrated an act, the infamy of which casts a shade over all that was splendid in his reign. But a degree of improvement had by that time taken place in the middle and lower ranks of society; and persecution, though still sufficiently barbarous in its spirit, was rendered less sanguinary and ferocious in its effects. On the one side, it found the instruments of popular fury less ready to its hand; and, on the other, the victims of its rage had a resource in their knowledge of arts and manufactures which opened to them a safe asylum in other countries.

CHAP. XX.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION IN THE LOW COUNTRIES. —
 CHURCH OF GENEVA. — CALVIN. — STATE OF AFFAIRS IN
 GERMANY. — PUBLICATION OF THE INTERIM. — COUNCIL OF
 TRENT. — CONCLUSION.

DURING the progress of the reformation in the larger European states, the spirit to which it owed its origin was working with equal force in situations of less political importance. In the Low Countries, a noble effort had been made, from the first, to throw off the bondage of superstition; and many were the witnesses to the truth, who did not refuse to shed their blood in its defence.* The power of the Roman clergy was sufficient, for a time, to secure the infliction of the highest penalties on those who ventured to resist their authority. But, as in other countries, the flame which burnt in the hearts of the reformers only shone the brighter as attempts were made to extinguish it. By degrees, the sympathy of the people and the magistrates was awakened; and the love of freedom, an old and deeply rooted principle in the natives of the United Provinces, lent its aid to the grander and more solemn inspirations of religion. The influence of Charles V. willingly acknowledged and obeyed, alone prevented the rapid triumph of the new system. In no part of his dominions was the rule of that monarch more gladly supported than in the Netherlands; and though to the few, — to the clear-sighted and deeply devoted believers in simple evangelical religion, — political appeals were vain, on the hearts of the many, the policy and the fame of the emperor exercised an influence which subdued every higher feeling.

* Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. cx. The martyrdom of Vols and his companion, Johannes Esch, was celebrated by Luther himself both in prose and poetry. Sleidan. Pfeizer. Luther's Leben. Epistolæ Lutheri, lib. ii. pp. 74. 145.

The accession of Philip II. gave a different character to the struggle. With no claims to the love or admiration of the people, he demanded a submission to his authority which could only have been rendered by the most abject fear, or the most devoted loyalty. Charles had permitted, or encouraged, the renewal of the persecutions from time to time. The Belgian priests were appeased by sacrifices whenever the voice of protestantism rose too loud for their tranquillity.* To these violations of truth and justice the world at large had been so long accustomed, that, when repeated only at long intervals, and with some attention to the capabilities of human patience, no great danger could arise from them to a monarch like Charles V. But Philip was not content with this occasional assertion of Romish supremacy. He resolved to clear the country of heresy, by some few efforts of zeal, or to pursue those who opposed him till the slower workings of oppression had done what was not to be effected by fire and sword.

The first measures of the new sovereign afforded a sufficient indication of his policy. Every decree which had been published by his father was renewed with additional expressions of severity. This was especially the case in respect to those obnoxious proclamations, which contained allusions to the establishment of the inquisition in the United Provinces, on the same plan as in Spain. The duchess of Parma, who had been intrusted with the government shortly after the accession of her brother, found every attempt to stop the rising spirit of discontent abortive. Fierce, indiscriminating persecution could alone give a momentary hope of silencing the voice of inquiry. In the year 1562 twenty-two persons were put to death in the province of Flanders, and a proportionable number in other parts of the country. But amidst all this, the reformers continued to pursue their onward course, and were now so far advanced in distinctness of doctrinal views as to be able to put forth a confession of faith — “The rule of believers dispersed

* This was especially the case in 1528 and 1545. Brandt. Sleidan.

throughout the Low Countries, who desired to live according to the purity of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

On the arrival of orders from Spain confirming the decrees of the council of Trent, the clergy as well as the people were divided on many of its most important provisions. But every cause of dispute speedily resolved itself into the grand question, whether the inquisition should be allowed to exercise the same authority in these provinces as in Spain. The dread of the holy office was universal; and the prospect of its establishment in the country levelled many of those distinctions of temper, opinion, and interest, which had formerly proved of such important advantage to the claims of Rome. Murmurs arose on all sides; and the wealthy merchants of Antwerp, the nobility of Brussels, the intelligent artisans throughout the country, began to unite together, and assume an attitude of defiance which indicated the near approach of civil war.

At the head of this formidable array was the prince of Orange, whose personal influence and enlightened views would have rendered him, at any period, highly serviceable to the party which acknowledged him as its leader. Under his guidance, the powerful confederacy of nobles and others proclaimed its resolution to withstand the establishment of the inquisition. The duchess of Parma, terrified at the aspect of affairs, summoned a council. In this dignified meeting, the prince of Orange urged every argument that could convince the government of its folly as well as cruelty in persisting in its present course. To the demand of the confederates, that the decrees respecting the inquisition should be formally annulled, the duchess replied, that she had not the power of stopping the proceedings of the holy office, but that she would use her influence in endeavouring to satisfy the other demands of the reformers.

In conformity with this promise, the pains and penalties inflicted on heresy were somewhat lessened.

Death by torture was converted into simple execution; and imprisonment for life into captivity for a certain term of years. These were considered vast instances of mercy; but from all participation in such provisions of temporary clemency the anabaptists were rigidly excluded. The government thus virtually retained its whole authority over the persons and property of the reformers. Both Holland and Belgium abounded in anabaptists; and their creed varied from the highest degrees of wild enthusiasm down to that of simple protestantism, characterised by only one peculiarity. Nothing, therefore, could be easier than to involve the reformers of any class in the ruin reserved for this once wild and dangerous, but now much sobered and cruelly persecuted, sect.

But the daily increasing zeal of the people at large overcame the petty distinctions and measures of the court. They began to sigh for the comfort to be derived from the regular preaching of the Gospel; to discover the necessity of knowledge, the value of a faith built upon the foundations of divine truth. At first, the danger of satisfying such desires obliged them to seek the recesses of gloomy forests before the preacher dare open his Bible, or the people gather round him to hear the words of life. By degrees their confidence increased, and they began to assemble in the retired suburbs of towns and villages. There, however, they soon found themselves surrounded by a numerous rabble, set on by the Roman clergy, and glad to exercise their own wretched malice under the pretence of proving their zeal for piety. The reformers, to defend themselves against the barbarities to which they were thus exposed, were obliged to carry arms to their places of assembly; and hence every day increased the chances of civil war, and enlarged the ranks of those who were ready to partake in the struggle. A mighty advantage was gained by the reformers in the appointment of the prince of Orange to the command of Antwerp. It was a concession on the part of Spain to the necessity of the times; and had the protestants pur-

sued this advantage with moderation, they might have saved themselves from many of the evils which their party had shortly afterwards to endure.

It is, perhaps, the sad necessity of every revolution, in opinion or system, that the rougher part of the work must be done by the gigantic power and rapid movements of the multitude. But, when once called into the field, their implements in hand, their spirits nerved for the labour, who is to bow them to the voice of rule, or oblige them to work only according to the line which marks the form and boundaries of the wise design? The reformers of the Netherlands were peculiarly exposed to dangers of this kind. They had been preceded by hordes of anabaptists, who, under John van Geelen and David George, diffused through the country most of the errors of Munser and John of Leyden. As the people in general began to favour the reformers, they naturally yielded to the invitations of that party which offered the strongest allurements to uncultivated minds and heated imaginations. Hence the temper of the early anabaptists, their wild enthusiasm, and reckless disregard of laws and institutions, spread through the increasing ranks of reformers with fearful rapidity. The consequence might be easily foreseen. In the month of August, 1566, the people rose, as at the instigation of some maddening influence, and rushing to the churches, tore down the images, and left even the buildings themselves in a state of ruin.*

The better instructed portion of protestants beheld this spectacle with dismay. It was at once discovered how terrible an advantage it would afford their ever watchful enemies, and how impossible it was to defend such conduct on any fair principle of reason or religion. But remonstrance was vain. The spirit of the nation was in arms, and though it might remain quiet for a brief season after this first encounter, it was plain that a general and decisive struggle was at hand. A fresh demonstration of popular feeling took place shortly after

* Brandt, vol. i. lib. vii. p. 191.

at Valenciennes ; and the duchess of Parma found herself every day involved in some new perplexity. Persecution lent its aid, in 1567, to redouble the fury of the people ; and the court of Spain, seeing that it only lost ground by thus rousing a spirit which it had not power to resist, determined on striking a blow which should at once bow the strength of the nation to the dust. The instrument which Philip selected to effect his purpose was the duke of Alva. This bold and daring man possessed abilities which might properly recommend him to a king, who had neither wisdom enough to govern by justice and humanity, nor hardihood sufficient to carry his designs into execution by the vigour of his own arm. Experienced in the horrors of war, familiar with the councils of the most arbitrary of princes, Alva received his commission with a delight which seemed to indicate, that he regarded it as affording him the sure means of glory and salvation ; of securing the favour of his sovereign, and the pardon of his offences from the church. The advice which he gave corresponded with the general tone of his character. “ Lose no more time,” said he ; “ but fall upon them while they are napping. Take them in their first sleep ; let the budding weeds be plucked up by the roots, before they shoot forth into strong branches.” *

Alva entered upon his office in 1567. The duchess of Parma regarded his appointment with jealousy and disdain. Though assured that he was not to interfere with the civil affairs of the provinces, she clearly foresaw that his ambition would not suffer him to remain long contented with the command of the army. These fears were fully realised. The support of her authority and influence was incompatible with the presence of a military dictator : her resignation, therefore, speedily followed the arrival of Alva, and he had the satisfaction of finding himself acknowledged by his sovereign as sole governor of the Netherlands.†

* Brandt, vol. i. lib. ix. p. 259.

† Id. *ibid.* p. 261.

Among the first acts of his power was the execution of the counts Egmont and Horn, two of the protestant leaders who had greatly distinguished themselves by the defence of their persecuted brethren. But particular instances of severity were judged insufficient for the necessities of the times ; and a court was established, under the title of the Council of Tumults, but which, not long after, received the more significant appellation of the Council of Blood. Alva was seconded in all his proceedings by the inquisition of Spain ; which, in 1568, published a manifesto, declaring that having received the reports of the sub-inquisition, it had come to the resolution of pronouncing all the Netherlanders heretics, or abettors of heresy, and therefore guilty of high treason, except such as were particularly excepted on the recommendation of the holy brothers.

One of the bloodiest scenes in the long series of persecutions was now enacted. Neither age nor rank, neither piety nor learning, retained its distinctions under the fierce leveller. Consternation and death held common sway over the country. " The gallows," says Heer Hooft, in a passage quoted by Brandt, " the wheels, stakes, and trees in the highways, were loaded with carcasses or limbs of such as had been hanged, beheaded, or roasted ; so that the air, which God had made for respiration of the living, was now become the common grave and habitation of the dead."

The barbarities of the soldiery ; the injustice of the tribunals ; the dark designs of the inquisition ; the addition made to the number of the bishops, and thereby to the number of domestic oppressors, formed altogether such a vast and complicated machine for breaking the heart of a nation, as has rarely been seen in any country, ancient or modern. But the spirit of the people seemed to become more buoyant the heavier the burden imposed ; and the prince of Orange possessed all the virtues and qualities fitted to secure confidence, and lead on a body of free and devoted men to the victorious assertion of their rights. His efforts were at length

crowned with success; and, in the year 1573, the power of the king of Spain, of Alva, and the inquisition, were so humbled, that, in the United Provinces, the doctrines of the reformation were acknowledged as the religion of the country.

Alva, on his recall to Spain, viewed with complacency the devastations which he had caused during the period of his residence in the Netherlands. No fewer than 100,000 houses were deserted by their inhabitants; who either escaped from his toils, and enriched other countries by their industry, or finally fell victims to his persevering rage. "I have caused," said he, "18,000 heretics and rebels to pass through the hands of the executioner, without counting those who perished in the war." Yet, astonishing as is this instance of sanguinary fury, the times afforded another yet fiercer zealot; for Vargas accused both Alva, and all the other ministers of Spain, of having lost the Netherlands by a foolish compassion.*

We turn from the contemplation of these terrific struggles, to that of a church which rose into authority under the guidance of a man who, for power of mind and vigour of character, may be ranked in the highest class to which intellectual endowments, chastened by holiness, can exalt their possessor. Calvin was born in the year 1509, at Noyon, a town of Picardy. Educated at first for the church, but afterwards as a lawyer, his expansive mind, and intense sensibility to the grandeur of divine truth, speedily drew him back from the studies of the jurist to those of the theologian. But he lived in an age when learning had ceased to be theoretical. He soon became involved in the disputes which began with the dawn of the reformation; joined himself to the first little band of French reformers; and, after sharing in their struggles and dangers, prepared his Institutes of Christianity, and dedicated the work to Francis I.

Allusion has already been made to Calvin's brief sojourn in Italy. Neither that country nor France was

* Brandt, vol. i. lib. x. p. 306.

in a state to encourage such a man as Calvin to make it the scene of his permanent labours. He required time to unfold his views; materials out of which to raise a structure; and the prospect of finding a spot where its foundation might be surely laid. Having returned to France, he hastily arranged such private business as demanded his attention, and then proceeded towards Strasburg. In his way to that city he arrived at Geneva, where the pious and learned William Farel had established a congregation, the superintendence of which already exceeded his powers of exertion. The arrival of Calvin filled the venerable reformer with joy. "Stay with us," he said, "and share my labours." And, when Calvin intimated his determination to pursue his original plan, and proceed farther, he emphatically exclaimed, "Behold, I declare to you, in the name of Almighty God, that, unless you will here become my fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord, his curse will be upon you for seeking yourself rather than Christ." *

Moved by the entreaties of Farel, and strongly impressed with the conviction that divine providence was instrumental to his arrival at a time when his labours seemed so much required, Calvin consented to remain at Geneva; and was elected by the authorities of the town, not only to the office of preacher, but to that of professor of divinity. His election took place in August, 1536; and the following year he began those vigorous measures which at first involved him in many troubles, but finally led to the establishment of his system, both of doctrine and discipline, throughout a large portion of the reformed church. Finding the people of Geneva unwilling to cease their disputes, or to conform to the confession of faith which their ministers proposed, he took the bold step of declaring, that the sacrament should not be administered till they manifested a temper more becoming the spirit of Christ's followers. Enraged at this proceeding, the magistrates immediately expelled

* Ruchat, *Hist. de la Reform. de la Suisse*, [tom. v. lib. xiv. p. 610. Beza, *Vita Calvini*, p. 368.

him from the church and city; and he took up his abode at Strasburg, where he established a congregation, and remained till the year 1541, when the often repeated solicitations of the people of Geneva induced him to return.

Calvin dreaded the continuance of the disorders which had, for so long a period, hindered the free course of the Gospel in the church, over which he was thus called to preside. His attention, therefore, was again called to the instituting of such rules of discipline as might preserve it from future convulsions, and give its ministers that due authority which was necessary to the efficiency of their labours. The administration of the new system was intrusted to a consistory; and this body received authority to punish offences against doctrine, or manners, with the highest ecclesiastical penalties. Calvin next put forth a liturgy, and a form for the communion service; and, some time after, succeeded in the important measure of establishing an academy, which became the resort of the most learned men in the protestant church.

The polity which Calvin and his associates had instituted, gave firmness and consistency to all the future proceedings of the Genevese reformers; and made their church a praise in Christendom, when a large portion of the protestant community was torn by all the evils which schism can inflict on the one hand, and bigotry on the other. It was in the bosom of the church of Geneva that many of our own persecuted reformers found themselves solaced amid their afflictions; and thence it was that they derived those stern notions respecting forms, and that system of doctrine, which were shortly after adopted by the Scotch reformers as the rule of their church; and by the puritans, to the great disturbance of the religion already established in this country. Calvin had the satisfaction of overcoming the enemies of his own repose and of the church; and, at the time of his death, which happened in 1564, he enjoyed a reputation and an authority greater than those

possessed by any other ecclesiastic of the age. Unfortunately for his fame he exercised, in the case of Servetus, a degree of fierce severity which admits of no apology, except such as serves to render his complete authority in the business a matter of doubt and hesitation.

While the churches of the reformation were thus growing up, triumphing over the power of the enemy, or only rising to afford him fresh occasion to rejoice at the follies and wickedness of mankind, events occurred which daily tended to the final settlement of the great controversy itself. The emperor had beheld with indignation the removal of the council from Trent to Bologna; and, at the beginning of 1548, sent the two lawyers, Francis de Vargas Mexia, and Martin Soria de Velasco, to require its immediate return to the original seat of its deliberations. His ambassador at Rome made the same demand of the pope, assembled with his cardinals in full consistory. But no attention was paid to these appeals; and the emperor, despairing of ever seeing peace restored to his states by the counsels of the pope, resolved on taking measures himself for the pacifying of his people. At the diet of Augsburg, therefore, he proposed that a confession of faith should be drawn up, to which both catholics and protestants might set their hands, till such time as the council should definitively settle the dispute. Three learned theologians, — Julius Phlug, Michael, bishop of Sidon, and John Agricola of Isleben, were appointed to prepare the confession. The two former were catholics, but men of character, temper, and experience; the latter was a Lutheran, who had been associated with Melancthon, and other distinguished men, in drawing up the famous Confession of Augsburg.

It was not till after long and earnest deliberation, that the divines intrusted with this difficult and important duty completed the proposed summary of doctrine. When finished, it received the title of the *Interim*, an appellation which signified the temporary character intended to be given it by the emperor. The

pope's nuncio transmitted a copy of the instrument to Rome and Bologna, and Paul immediately convened an assembly of his principal advisers to consider its contents. This was almost a work of supererogation. The very attempt of the emperor to restore peace by the publication of the Interim was regarded as unlawful ; and of the articles which it contained, two were pointedly declared heretical ; namely, that which permitted the administration of the communion in both kinds, and the marriage of priests. But Charles had taken his resolution ; the pope appealed in vain to his fears or his affections, and the Interim was made the law of the empire by a decree of the diet.*

This bold and decisive proceeding did little more than create a new subject for dispute. The pope and his partizans continued to protest against it as subversive of the truth, and of every species of ecclesiastical authority. As little acceptable was it to the protestants. Neither Calvin nor Bucer would acknowledge it. The venerable elector of Saxony refused to purchase the friendship of the emperor by receiving it ; and both parties agreed in reprobating the Interim as similar in origin and spirit to the Type, the Ecthesis, or Henoticon, those instruments of imperial pride and tyranny in the earlier days of the Gospel.

The quarrel between the two great powers, the civil and ecclesiastical, was just at its height when the sudden death of Paul III. relieved the emperor from the perils attending a struggle with such a potentate. Cardinal del Monte, so distinguished for his exertions in the council, was elevated to the vacant chair, by the title of Julius III., and he had the good sense and policy to reassemble the council at Trent. The emperor acknowledged this act as an instance of respect too valuable to be passed unnoticed, and forthwith proved his willingness to show a corresponding reverence for the church, by issuing a decree which forbade the profes-

* Sleidan, tom. ii. p. 475.

sion of any doctrine, or the practice of any rite, which should contradict the canons of the church of Rome.

On the 1st of May, 1551, the council resumed its deliberations in the city of Trent; and the members took their places in the seats which they had occupied so many years before at the opening of the council.* It does not fall within our plan to trace its proceedings with the same particularity as when endeavouring to show the spirit which gave it its original character. The council recommenced with the eleventh session, and pursued its consultations to the fifteenth. But the business of almost every meeting was disturbed by the impossibility under which it laboured, of either satisfying, or openly refusing, the claims of the protestants to a safe conduct, and a patient hearing at its tribunal. War then began to threaten again the peace of Germany. Maurice, elector of Saxony, still less willing to bear the imperial yoke than his venerable relative, had raised an army to defend his rights, and in the course of a few months gave the emperor reason to tremble at the success of his arms, and the increase of his party. His approach to the neighbourhood of Trent convinced the members of the council that they could no longer continue their sittings with safety, or, at least with the tranquillity necessary to the dignity of their situation. The council, therefore, resolved on suspending its proceedings till the return of peace; and, with the exception of some of the Spanish bishops, not a prelate, after a few days, was to be seen in Trent.

The successes of Maurice and the confederates, at length obliged the emperor to submit to a conference at Passau, for the settlement of their dispute. In this meeting it was agreed, that the principal demands of the elector should be granted, on condition that he laid down his arms, and exercised his best influence for the restoration of tranquillity. The terms proposed by Maurice were, that the landgrave of Hesse should be set at liberty, and that whatever measures had been

* Paul Sarpi. Pallavicini.

taken against the protestants should be wholly set aside and annulled. This was the substance of the famous treaty of Passau, the provisions of which secured the reformers from so many of the evils which it was hourly expected they would experience at the hands of the emperor.*

With the cessation of hostilities, the minds of men were again turned to the objects contemplated by the council. But that august assembly did not resume its sittings till Charles V. had ceased to be emperor, and both Julius III. and his two immediate successors, Marcellus II. and Paul IV. had been removed by death. In 1560, it was convoked by Pius IV., and in the spring of the following year resumed its deliberations. It continued its sittings with various intimations of the spirit which ruled in the bosom of the Roman catholic church, and of the constant pressure from without of those mighty energies which belonged to the antagonist principle of reform. The defence of the prelacy formed one of the main objects of its labours; and in this it was greatly assisted by a new order of religious devotees, which seemed to inherit and cherish in itself all the powers and principles of the old times. Ignatius Loyola founded the society of Jesus at the period when Rome stood most in need of such a support. His abilities were equal to his enthusiasm, and the bull which established his order in 1540, raised at the same time a triple wall round the altars of St. Peter. Lainez, his successor, inherited his genius and his enthusiasm. In the congregation held at Trent, August 16. 1563, he overpowered every species of opposition, and once more gave to Rome the temporary possession of its earlier dominion.† The settlement of doctrine and discipline

* Sleidan, tom. iii. liv. xxiv. p. 221.

† The following account given of the jesuits shortly after the institution of the order will show how differently they were viewed by portions of the Roman church itself. The former is the judgment of the Paris divines, the latter of their historian Damianus.

“There is a fraternity which has lately arisen, called the Jesuits, who will seduce many; who, acting, for the most part, like the Scribes and Pharisees, will strive to overturn the truth. They will go near to accom-

formed the next great object of the council's deliberations. No form of confession or articles had as yet determined the precise rule of faith in the Roman church. By the time that the twenty-fifth session of the council of Trent grew to a close, it possessed a body of canons which left scarcely a question of doctrine, or a principle of discipline, unnoticed or undetermined.

This celebrated assembly met for the last time on the 4th of December, 1563. The decrees having been read and confirmed, the president gave his benediction, and took a solemn farewell of the numerous illustrious personages by whom he was surrounded. Deep emotion was exhibited by the fathers at this moment, and tears and acclamations followed the announcement that

plish their object, for they transform themselves into various shapes : among pagans, they will be pagans ; among atheists, atheists ; Jews among Jews ; and reformers among reformers, for the sole purpose of discovering your intentions, your hearts, and desires. These persons are spread over the whole earth : they will be admitted into the councils of princes, which will, however, be no wiser from their introduction ; they will infatuate them so far as to induce them to reveal the greatest secrets of their hearts ; they will be in no way aware of them. This will be the consequence of their advisers neglecting to observe the laws of God and of his gospel, and conniving at the sins of princes. Notwithstanding, God will, in the end, in order to avenge his law, cut off this society, even by those who have most supported and employed it ; so that, at last, they will become odious to all nations."

"Eodem anno vigesimo-primo, adultâ jam nequitia, palàm Ecclesiæ bellum indixit Lutherus : læsus in Pampelonensi arce Ignatius, alius ex vulnere, fortiorque quasi defendendæ religionis signum sustulit."

"Lutherus Petri sedem probis, convitiisque læscere aggreditur : Ignatius, quasi ad suscipiendam causam, à S. Petro prodigiôsè curatur."

"Lutherus irâ, ambitione, libidine victus, à religiosâ vitâ desciscit : Ignatius Deo vocante impigrè obsecutus, à profanâ ad religiosam transit."

"Lutherus cum sacrâ Deo virgine incestas nuptias init sacrilegus : perpetuæ continentiæ voto se adstringit Ignatius."

"Lutherus omnem superiorum contemnit auctoritatem : prima Ignatii monita sunt, plena christianæ demissionis, subesse et parere."

"In sedem apostolicam, furentis in morem, declamat Lutherus : illam ubique tuetur Ignatius."

"Ab eâ quotquot potest Lutherus avertit ; quotquot potest conciliat, reducitque Ignatius."

"Adversus illam nitentur omnia Lutheri studia atque conatus : Ignatius suos, suorumque labores peculiari voto illi consecrat."

"Lutherus sacris Ecclesiæ ritibus venerationem, cultumque detraxit : Ignatius omnem illis reverentiam asserit."

"Missæque sacrificio, Eucharistiæ, Deiparæ, Tutelaribus Divis, et illis, tanto Lutheri furore impugnatis, Pontificum indulgentiis : in quibus novo semper invento celebrandis Ignatii sociorumque desudat industria."

"Luthero illo Germaniæ probro, Epicuri porco, Europæ exitio, orbis infelici portento, Dei atque hominum odio, etc., æterno consilio Deus opposuit Ignatium." *Synopsis*, &c., lib. i. diss. vi. p. 18.

their labours had been well completed. The 254 members of the council then, one by one, signed the decrees, which thus received the sanction of twenty-five archbishops, a hundred and sixty-eight bishops, two cardinals, three patriarchs, and four legates. On the 26th of January, 1564, Pius IV. confirmed the decrees in full consistory ; and forthwith began a series of operations to secure their reception in the various countries over which the authority of his church might still be expected to prevail. In Spain and Portugal ; by the catholics of Germany and Flanders ; in the various Italian states, and in Poland, the dictates of the council were accordingly acknowledged with little opposition or inquiry. France only, notwithstanding the horrors of its persecutions, resisted and supported its liberty and independence against the continued efforts of successive pontiffs.

Protestants beheld, with mingled sorrow and indignation, the authority assigned to the decisions of a tribunal conducted with so little regard to the rights of universal Christendom. But they had triumphed sufficiently to leave them little to fear for the future success of their cause. They might still have to struggle against powerful adversaries ; but all the grand principles of protestantism were known and cherished by men in whose hearts the seed of nothing that is good could remain without bringing forth fruit unto life.

We have now pursued the history of the Christian church from its establishment by the Divine Sanctifier, to the partial termination of its most eventful struggle with the enemies of its peace and purity. Alternate light and darkness diversify the prospect. Passions the most inconsistent with Christian holiness, and corruptions the most opposite to Christian truth, are seen predominating from age to age. The gloom of lengthened periods is only broken by the unexpected appearance of some preacher of the truth, or some witness to its power amid darkness and suffering. Then come days

in which the strength of evil seems yielding to the energetic love and wise determinations of God's people. The vices of the world are openly reproved. Methods are taken for the better publication of the Gospel. Superstition owns the power of rising intelligence, and discord the ineffable might and sweetness of the evangelical blessing. Joy fills the Christian's heart as he contemplates these signs of God's advancing kingdom, of the ever active, though often hidden, virtue of his grace. But again the darkness prevails; the children of light pass away with their burning lamps; the Divine Word is delivered by slothful messengers; and the world sinks back into its unconsciousness of God and of his kingdom. Melancholy would be the reflections of the believer were there not something permanent on which to fix his eye in the midst of these changes. The temporary return of light, the occasional conquests of good over evil, may be sufficient to illumine the page of political history, and satisfy the reader anxious only to escape from the struggles of an uncertain, to the triumphs of a mature, civilisation. But the Christian looks for the existence of the same vital principles in every age, and for the certain advancement of the kingdom of God in the midst of every opposing circumstance. To lose sight of these life-giving principles, or to suppose that the power of the Gospel is not progressively on the increase, would be the ruin of his hopes, and almost the upsetting of his creed. However changeable, therefore, the scenes around him, however uncertain the operations of the most plausible of human counsels, and the promises of the brightest events, he discovers amid the thick and floating shadows which envelope it, the continual progress of the sun of righteousness towards its meridian glory.

In the bosom of the Christian church, and no where else, righteousness and peace offer to mankind a remedy for all the evils which materially or permanently affect their happiness. Happy, therefore, will be that gener-

ation in which the labours of the wise, the love of the good, and the united prayers of all classes of believers, shall be seen to clear away the stumbling blocks and the barriers which have been piled up before its portals, in old times by the corruption, in later ages by the neglect, of truth: in the Roman church by pride, in the church of the reformation by disunion of purpose, and worldliness of spirit.

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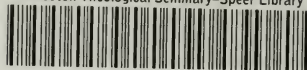
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